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The Week

THE struggle for limitation of naval armament reminds us of Mother Goose's old woman trying to get the pig over the stile. Fire won't burn stick, stick won't beat dog, dog won't bite pig, pig won't get over the stile, and we shan't get home tonight. Italy won't renounce parity with France, France won't give up replacements, England will use the "escalator clause" of the London agreement, the United States will have to build still more warships, and disarmament is further off than ever. Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson's great diplomatic triumph in bringing France and Italy together appears to have evaporated; the British Foreign Office rejects what it calls France's new proposal to resume replacements; France maintains that this was part of her program all the time and that Mr. Henderson suppressed it in talking to the Italian authorities in order to achieve the agreement. One cannot avoid the suspicion that the French government is using this obstacle at the moment for its nuisance value. France has had her way in Europe since the Armistice, largely by being more intransigent than anybody else so that she could be bought off from disturbing the peace; and Italy has learned the lesson from her. Now France wants Britain's support against the Austro-German customs union, and so threatens both the British Labor government's diplomatic victory and its need for economy. It is all very annoying and archaic when what the world so obviously needs is less of aggressive nationalism, less of traditional diplomacy and more economic coöperation on a large scale. This sort of thing increases one's suspicion that the Russians are correct in thinking that Western capitalism is too stupid to save itself from the catastrophe of war and revolution.

AS FORECAST by The New Republic some weeks ago, the depression has not come to an end. "The usual spring peak has come and gone without bringing any definite signs of improvement," says the Guaranty Trust Company in its survey. "Expansion in most industries last month was of no more than seasonal magnitude." While business is now occupied, as usual, in setting its hopes on a "fall revival," insiders are wondering what influence, if any, may be counted upon to turn the cycle upward then. It is a startling fact that the best informed economists simply do not know what to look for as an infallible sign of coming improvement. Is it a better bond market? Or reduced stocks of commodities? Or enlargement of imports? Or an upward trend in construction, or in some other industry? After prosperity has come, they can rationalize a set of "causes." They can look back at the curve and say, "Here revival began." But they cannot recognize that point at the moment when it arrives. This is a symptom of the primitive state of economic science. The only sound lesson for public policy is not to substitute "confidence" for action to prepare against eventualities. Unemployment is still with us in large volume, and as far as anybody knows, it may be worse next winter than last. The wage-cutting movement may gather momentum. We have, even

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yet, no rational public agency to deal with unemployment, no emergency funds to replace exhausted municipal treasuries, which already supply 70 per cent or more of the haphazard American dole. We have no program of public works big enough to make much difference. And the fault chiefly lies with the Republican administration and its adherents.

MR. MONTAGUE NORMAN, governor of the Bank of England, has come to the United States and gone back to England, moving in his usual cloud of mystery. The public does not know exactly what he wanted to accomplish, and how far he attained whatever he was after. Apparently well authenticated rumors, however, are to the effect that he was trying to enlist American participation in an international investment bank, which would mobilize the surplus capital resources of this country, France and England for long-time credits to countries which might employ them for productive purposes. Such a plan was mentioned at the time the Bank for International Settlements was being set up, but that institution was so strictly limited that it cannot serve as an agency for new capital investment. The theory behind the suggestion sounds reasonable enough—that nobody can prosper unless the whole world does, and that the world needs a new outpouring of capital investment in order to revive trade and start purchasing power circulating. The difficulty is to know, however, where new capital may safely be invested. Before the depression, as Mr. Lawrence Dennis has ably pointed out in these pages, the world was living on international credit, but that could not last because most of it was poured into projects so far from being truly productive that the borrowing countries could not repay. Russia might legitimately seek large credits, but the government of the United States can be counted upon stubbornly to oppose any such useful employment of our surplus. Probably France would adopt the same attitude. And no country except Russia seems to have developed the ability sufficiently to enlarge the purchasing power of the ultimate consumers so that even the existing productive capacity of industry may be utilized.

MAYOR Jimmy Walker of New York has now explained away the attacks upon the municipal administration and the efforts to investigate it. These are all, he told the recent breakfast of the Holy Name Society of the Fire Department, the work of Communists seeking to overthrow the municipal, state and national governments. Perhaps Jimmy will be able to get away with this—in New York; the people of that community are not noted for their political sagacity. But the fact that he deemed it necessary to drag in the Red herring so soon, so violently and so clumsily suggests that he is badly frightened, and thereby reënforces the belief that the investigation by the state legislature, which is about to begin, was badly needed. Perhaps more important than Jimmy's antics is the fact that an important lay society of the Roman Catholic Church should have been used as the vehicle for about the cheapest display of demagogery of this generation. We cannot believe that such identification of the Church with New York's rotten political machine represents the best judgment of the Catholic leaders; and we are supported in this view by the significant announcement, twenty-four hours after the news of Jimmy's exhibition had been printed, that in the New Jersey diocese no political speech, or any speech by a political aspirant, is permitted at any Holy Name Society meeting.

NO DOUBT the conservatives will scoff at the report of the Economics Commission of the National Council of Christian Associations, the body to which the Y. W. C. A. and the Y. M. C. A. belong. The report denounces the Republican and Democratic parties, advocates action through the Socialist or a new party with a socialistic program, and demands, while we are waiting for a reorganized economic order, measures like unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, reductions of tariffs, higher income and inheritance taxes, and world-mindedness. Whenever anyone goes off the business reservation, he is immediately disposed of with a diminutive label like "parlor pink," "academic theorist," "self-styled intelligentsia," or even "impractical idealist." If the conservatives ever read history, however, they would find cause to be seriously alarmed when a political or social order comes to be unpopular with a steadily increasing number of those who rely chiefly upon intellectual or moral standards. These inconsiderable and impractical people constitute a sensitive ammeter which registers pretty faithfully the heightening of social tension. More and more persons who are capable of real thought and feeling are bitterly resenting the way our institutions operate. This presages a loss of confidence in those institutions by many of those who normally would be expected to support them. The phrases of economic conservatism sound more hollow every day.

MORE than a year ago, the Forbes Commission recommended, and President Hoover accepted, a plan for ending the occupation of Haiti. New elections were to be held, the government restored to the Haitian people, Americans in the public service replaced by natives, and the Marines were finally to leave. The elections were held in due course, M. Stenio Vincent was chosen as President, and he appointed a coalition Cabinet representing all important political factions. In other words, the Haitians did everything they could to carry out the new policy; but nothing else has happened. The American civilians remain in office and no steps have been taken toward the departure of the Marines. It is hard to resist the conclusion that the Forbes report, which was from the beginning so obnoxious to the American residents of Haiti,

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is being subjected to sabotage. Naturally, the population of the island is becoming restless because of the delay; and this increased nervous tension may react disastrously, not upon the American but upon the Stenio Vincent government. The Haitian settlement was hailed at the time, and quite properly, as a fine achievement of the Hoover administration. Must it be wiped off the slate because of the failure to carry out the good intentions which the Forbes report expressed?

SPEAKING of Haiti reminds us that General Butler, The Marine Who Tells It, is in again. His feelings are hurt because the Haitian Minister to the United States professed never to have heard of Fort Rivière, which was held by Haitians and was taken by American Marines, commanded by General Butler (then a major) in 1915. As a matter of fact, no Haitian can do anything more courteous to Americans than forgetting (or professing to forget) about the taking of Fort Rivière and similar incidents of the campaign of "pacification" in the Negro republic. The capture of this fort may have represented all in the way of bravery that General Butler so delicately suggests it did; but it remains true that, as in so many other engagements in that year, only one American was wounded, while all the Haitian defenders, bottled up in the fort, were either killed or wounded. The slaughter of the Haitians during this campaign was so appalling that Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, telegraphed asking that it be ended "except in the case of urgent necessity." For our own sake, perhaps the best thing we can do is to follow M. Bellegarde's example, and forget.

WE REGRET that The New Freeman has had to appeal to its readers for financial support, its backer having suffered so in the depression that he cannot continue this philanthropy to the intelligent reading public. Minority voices are too rare in journalism, and this one in particular would be greatly missed by the small company which has already been attracted to it. Urbane, unpretentious and ruthless, aiming neither at that popular level which brings large circulation nor at the commercial exploitation of popular favor which enables periodicals to live on advertising, it has gone its chaste way with admirable point and clarity. We have missed in it some of that assurance which the old Freeman displayed in pooh-poohing everything else on the ground that the single tax alone would cure all evils; while The New Freeman has not abandoned the crusade against private usurpation of socially created land values, it has shown doubts whether something more than warfare against this privilege is not necessary. Important as monopoly is for a successful business or a revolutionary movement, it brings death to independent thought; if periodicals like The New Freeman and The New Republic can be called competitors, we wish only that they were more numerous and more strong.

Our Caribbean Empire

THE PRESENT discussion of our policy in Nicaragua has served at least one valuable purpose: it has reminded us that there is in fact a Caribbean question, which has long existed and will be with us for many years to come. This region constitutes the American Empire; we have committed acts of aggression there, have assumed commitments and initiated activities which make it impossible either to let matters drift or to seek to settle things with a few casual *ad hoc* improvisations.

Messrs. Hoover and Stimson continue to insist that they have not changed our policy; but it is increasingly clear that they have in fact done so. They are being attacked in all conservative, militaristic and imperialistic quarters with a ferocity which is the best indication of the size and importance of the interests which believe themselves to be challenged by the new attitude. The argument against the government is that when Secretary Stimson announced that the United States is unable to protect American life and property in the interior of Nicaragua, and will offer such protection only at the seacoast, he was guilty of equivocation; that in the past, the United States has found it possible to control substantially all of the country. It is further argued that the new attitude is based on a policy in which Nicaragua is only incidental: that since our unpopularity throughout Latin America has interfered with our trade, we are now attempting to conciliate our southern neighbors, and in doing so, have unwisely abandoned the Nicaragua policy specifically enunciated by President Coolidge in 1927 and followed, in general, by all American governments during the past third of a century.

It is true that the Hoover administration has attempted a noteworthy improvement in certain aspects of our Latin American policy. Even before he took office, the President had manifested the importance which the good will of Spanish America has in his eyes, by his unofficial visit to the chief southern republics. As regard South America, we have abandoned the embarrassing and illogical Wilsonian doctrine of "legitimacy" and now recognize revolutionary governments which have come into power by force. One of Mr. Hoover's early acts was sending a special commission to Haiti, which recommended that the Marine domination of that country should be brought to a close—though the government has been inexplicably dilatory in following out this policy. Another important straw in the wind was seen when a revolution took place in Panama with the tacit consent of the United States, which has enough soldiers in the Canal Zone to have maintained the old regime if it had desired to do so. Though we have stood by and permitted Machado in Cuba to exercise a ruthless tyranny, the very fact that the revolutionists

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are now so strong is evidence that we are not giving him the whole-hearted support to which he lays claim. Before the present flare-up in Nicaragua we had announced the complete withdrawal of the American Marines, to begin immediately and to be concluded not later than the elections of next year.

It is also true that historians will undoubtedly record the present period as the end of one era and the beginning of another. Financial imperialism has about run its course in Latin America, and the banker is to be succeeded by the trader. While vast investments are still to be made there, the time has passed for the sort of enterprise we have seen during the past thirty years, when our stake in these countries has increased from two or three hundred millions to more than three billions. A large part of this sum, of course, represents loans by private American bankers to governments actually under their control—loans many of which were not needed or wanted by the people who must repay them, and were only made possible through the greed of government officials. President Hoover is one of many persons who believe that more profit is now to be obtained from legitimate trade with Latin America than from bankers' exploitations—particularly when this exploitation, primarily centering in a few weak and backward states near the Equator, causes our goods to be boycotted in other and more important countries all the way to Tierra del Fuego.

His attitude holds hope for the future; but what of the liabilities left over from the past? No one can look at the map of the Caribbean, seeing there our string of naval bases, our territory at the Panama Canal, our "spheres of influences," our possessions, our dependencies, and not realize that the United States is an empire in fact. Shall we withdraw from this part of the world, or stay? And if we stay, on what terms? Mr. Hoover certainly does not propose that we shall call a halt to the process of international capitalism which is chiefly responsible for our being where we are today, or that we shall modify the situation which has already been created. He does not answer the arguments of the military men who say that the naval bases in the Caribbean are necessary for the protection of the Canal, and even for that of our own coastline in case of war with some European power. Admirable as his new attitude is, by comparison with that of Mr. Coolidge, in substance it comes down to saying that in the future we shall try to act a little more discreetly than before. It does not mean that the system is abolished or materially improved. Mr. Hoover's fundamental philosophy is such that he would strongly object to seeing it altered to any serious degree.

In the long run, there is no reason why the people of the United States should have any degree of suzerainty whatever over the Caribbean countries. The Panama Canal would be safer if internationalized under some such instrumentality as the League of Nations or a Pan-American league than if we persist in maintaining it exclusively by our own military strength. If it were thus internationalized, the greater part of the argument for naval bases in the Caribbean would have disappeared. And naval warfare, in any case, is changing so rapidly under the pressure of scientific invention that no one can say whether such bases will be of any use even twenty years hence. As for the economic aspects of our present imperialism, our investments in the Caribbean area will doubtless continue as long as private capitalism continues to dominate the United States itself. What is needed in the meantime is first of all the policy on which Messrs. Hoover and Stimson have already made a beginning, of serving notice that those who go to these turbulent countries, or send their money, may not expect to be followed and protected by American guns; that they must take their own chances just as an American investor in a strong country, like England or France or Germany, must do. And second, if the actual presence of revolution makes it necessary to send warships to the ports for the immediate and temporary protection of the lives of foreigners, this ought to be done not by the United States acting alone, but jointly by all the powers of the Western Hemisphere.

The Iron Chancellor Dodges

ONE OF the knottiest problems of the British Labor government has been how to make both ends meet during depression, with expenses growing as a result of the increased need for unemployment relief, and with receipts shrinking. A substantial part of the financial community has been arguing for a policy of drastic retrenchment of governmental expenditures, especially by trimming "the dole." At the same time an influential group of Liberals and some of the Laborites have argued for increased expenditures of a "productive" nature, such as extensive public works, to stimulate industry and sop up unemployment. Where the money was to come from has been a matter of dispute—some arguing for a protective tariff, some, like Mr. John Maynard Keynes, for a general revenue tariff, and some for still higher income taxes. Since Mr. Philip Snowden, Chancellor of the Exchequer, has been known to be not only a convinced believer in free trade but an opponent of higher taxation as a depressing influence on industry, there was no little eagerness to see what he would recommend. Would he defy his party's cohorts by coming out for retrenchment in unemployment relief?

Mr. Snowden's budget speech apparently dodged all these issues, escaping from the immediate dilemma by expedients which had been discussed little or not at all. Estimating the deficit for the next fiscal year at $186,000,000, he proposed to make up $100,000,000 of it by appropriating that

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amount from a fund which has been held in New York for exchange purposes—a step which is made possible by the existence of the Bank for International Settlements. By making income-tax payers meet their instalments earlier in the year—but without changing the rates—he will gain $50,000,000 more. And an increase of two pence on the import duty on oil will yield, it is estimated, $37,500,000. These measures will tide over the government if business revival comes in the meantime; neither drastic curtailment of relief nor great expansion of expenditure on public works is contemplated, though road building will be helped by further borrowing.

For the longer future, Mr. Snowden has two aces in the hole. Interest rates now being low, he can refund a large part of the public debt at a considerable saving to the treasury. And he proposes a tax on capitalized value of land—something that will fill the followers of Henry George with delight and will be strenuously opposed by all the powerful landlords of Great Britain. If Mr. Snowden can devise a form of land taxation which has as little chance of being passed on to the consumer as income or profits taxes, he will have tapped a new source of revenue which will both raise the budget out of danger for years to come and help greatly in the equalization of income.

The budget speech makes almost no contribution to the basic economic problems confronting British industry and labor, but it does at least seem to tide the government over a crisis.

A Career Open to Talent

THERE is a problem whose social importance is often overlooked: it is that of the career open to ability, *la carrière ouverte aux talents*. Whatever career is most open, offering the greatest rewards and the least serious handicaps to ambitious young men without wealth or position, will lure them away from careers they might otherwise follow. By concentrating talent in one field, it may give direction to a whole civilization.

Early in the history of the Republic, politics was this open career, though the statement is especially true of the South; in the North there were also manufacturing and trade; in New England there was divinity. But the period in which politics was the surest avenue to preferment ended with the Civil War, and was succeeded by an age of business men. Clay, Webster and Calhoun, if they had been born fifty years later, would probably have ended as millionaires. Had they been born at the turn of the century, they might now be writers.

For literature is rapidly becoming the open career that ambitious people follow. Consider the position of a young man (or a young woman) lately graduated from college and sent landless and penniless into the world to make his way by his wits—let us assume that he has them. Should he make a career of politics? In theory he is not unwilling, but his own beliefs are too opposed to those of the majority, and even if he is willing to betray them for the sake of success, he is uncertain of how to go about his betrayal, of how to take his first step toward Washington. The paths are tangled; there no longer exists an easy road from pleading before a jury to pleading before a body of voters, and thence to presenting their case before the state legislature, before the House, before the Senate. Politics, he decides, is a game for disreputable heelers or wealthy amateurs. As for business, it has ceased to be a career for young men without capital or influential friends. They soon learn—if they do not know in advance—that the best job is likely to go to the boss's son and the second-best job to his nephew. All jobs may end when the business is merged with another. Mere talent, in any case, is no assurance of success; it is something dangerous to be mistrusted by those who lack it.

Yet talent is all our young man has—that and a college education on which he places little reliance. Hungry for honor, still hungrier for a chance to influence the course of our civilization—or simply to work—he surveys the field before him. He sees careers which are open to him on fairer terms than politics or business: there is teaching, for example; there is the civil service; but neither of these appeals to people of the ambitious type with which we are dealing. More brilliant rewards are found in less conventional fields of activity: motion pictures, aviation, amateur and professional athletics. What apprentice in Wall Street could make a million dollars as quickly as Gene Tunney? What young woman could become a first-page newspaper feature as suddenly as Ruth Nichols? Fortunately, not every college graduate is eager to make either a cold million or the front-page headlines; some of them thirst after a more difficult type of prestige. These, if they have talent for design, are apt in the present stage of our civilization to become architects. If ready in expression, they probably follow the career of letters.

It is a difficult career, and overcrowded already; the material rewards it offers are not very shining; but at least it has this advantage, that the road to success is already mapped and that talent is pretty sure to be recognized in the end. Each year—or at least each decade—it is attracting a larger proportion of the ambitious young people who might formerly have devoted themselves to other careers. The effect of these apprentices on literature as an art is impossible to calculate. Their effect on literature as a profession is also doubtful, but it is fairly certain that they will add to the importance of its place in American society. Feeling the strength of numbers and ambition they may assert themselves. They may even assume the social responsibility that writers cannot forever avoid. Eventually they may come to play the part in society that was played by the politicians and orators of a vanished South.

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Cuba and the Bankers

THE SITUATION in Nicaragua, discussed in another article in this issue, is an outstanding example of the way in which our politico-economic imperialism in the Caribbean region gets us into trouble; but it is of course neither the only nor the most complete illustration. The position in Cuba is not less significant for those who are concerned about the interaction between the power of American money and the opportunities for exploitation which occur in the tropical Latin American countries.

At the moment, President Machado seems in a weaker position than at any other time in recent years. He is now seeking a truce with the Nationalist leaders, a truce for which the way has been paved, so we have been told, through the efforts of the American Ambassador, Harry F. Guggenheim. In his sudden new attempt to be conciliatory, President Machado has released a number of Nationalists from prison, and others have been recalled from exile. Certain of the restrictions on liberty of the press and the right of free speech have also been modified or withdrawn.

No one who knows President Machado, or the interests behind him, can believe that these acts are the result of any sudden reformation of his character, or of their intentions. The only tenable hypothesis is that he at last realizes he is fighting with his back to the wall. All his repressive measures have only served to intensify and unite the opposition. If it were not for the fear that the United States might come to his rescue, he would certainly have been overthrown long ago. If the current reports from Cuba are verified with the passage of time—and skepticism is the only sensible attitude for the present—it will merely mean that those who have been backing Machado at last realize that the course he has been following is an unworkable one, and are insisting that he should either modify it or get out, to be replaced by a more intelligent servant of their policy.

The crux of our present relationship with Cuba, as with other Caribbean and Central American countries, is financial. Not only are there tremendous private investments by Americans in Cuban industry and agriculture, which certainly have an effect upon our national policy toward Cuba, but there are loans to the government itself which share all the undesirable characteristics pointed out in The New Republic by Lawrence Dennis, in his recent series of articles, " 'Sold' on Foreign Bonds." The United States appears to have created a vicious circle for itself in regard to loans to Latin American countries: first we extend loans to these countries until their normal credits are exhausted; then we increase the interest (or bonus) until each succeeding loan becomes more of a burden; when the debts become too large and cannot be collected, we intervene with military forces and take over the collection of customs. It is a wretched formula: its net effect is to degrade our Latin American neighbors and to place the United States on a low level of esteem; it is not merely a short-sighted policy but one which, if continued, is certain to keep Latin American countries in an unstable condition. Our statesmen, of course, pretend that our interventions occur because of political instability, but what they fail to realize, unless they are much more cunning than we suspect, is that our debt policy is a primary cause of instability in these borrowing countries.

A calm glance at the facts of the present Cuban debt situation gives an unmistakable clue to the future. Prior to the presidency of Machado, the internal debt amounted to a little less than $10,000,000; in addition there was an outstanding foreign indebtedness, the so-called Speyer and Morgan loans, of $67,000,000. Since the beginning of Machado's administration the following debts are reported to have been incurred:

> Morgan loan of $9,000,000, to be amortized at the rate of $900,000 per year, of which $6,300,000 is still outstanding.
>
> The public-works loan of $60,000,000, of which $20,000,000 is now outstanding.
>
> Public-works bonds issued in March, 1930, totaling $80,000,000, of which $40,000,000 has been floated in the American market. The remaining $40,000,000 of this loan is pledged as a guarantee of credit with the Chase National Bank; $20,000,000 of this credit came due on March 7, 1931, but was not paid.
>
> Another $20,000,000 in treasury certificates has been delivered to Warren Brothers and the Cia. Cubana de Contratistas.

Another loan of $42,000,000 is impending on behalf of the Chadbourne sugar pool.

Machado has been a thoroughly bad President for Cuba. His acts of repression constitute a shameful blot on the history of his country, and reflect directly on the United States, which assumed an obligation, under the Platt Amendment, to maintain the liberties of the Cuban people. But it is clear that if Machado should now behave himself, or be replaced by a better man, it would be only the beginning of the process of setting Cuba free.

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An American Engineer Looks at the Five Year Plan

The following report on the Five Year Plan is in substance part of a speech which Mr. H. J. Freyn, the well known Chicago engineer, recently delivered before a meeting of the Taylor Society. Mr. Freyn has been doing engineering work for the Soviet Union during the past four years. His company is at present building a steel plant in the famous Kuznetsk Basin in Siberia, and is also cooperating with Russian engineers at "Gipromez," the central engineering organization, preparing plans for new iron and steel plants.—THE EDITORS.

AS MY PERSONAL interest and that of my company is primarily centered in the Soviet iron and steel industry, I am more familiar with this particular phase of the Five Year Plan than with the others and can speak of it with some semblance of authority. However, I am convinced that the same observations will also apply to the other branches of economic endeavor in the Soviet Union.

Broadly speaking, all Soviet industry is under the general direction of the Supreme Council of National Economy, the chairman of which is, incidentally, a member of the Council of Peoples' Commissars. This council coöperates with the State Planning Commission. An important role is played by a special organization known as the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, which acts as a sort of independent check on the activities and decisions of the Supreme Council of National Economy and other governmental bodies.

Factories and plants are in charge of "Red" managers. They are invariably party members picked from the ranks of the workers. Their education is limited and their previous experience deficient. They are learning while administering their office. No wonder their efforts are not always successful. Occasionally Red directors are removed from their positions after a failure to prove their worth and are sent to the Red university in Moscow to round out their knowledge. I do not believe that any incapable or offensive manager could remain in an executive position by sheer political pull or personal influence. The workers, who enjoy great privileges and power, would soon bring so much collective pressure to bear in high places that he would be removed and replaced.

I am satisfied that the loyalty, honesty and unselfishness of those individuals in responsible executive positions are beyond a shadow of doubt. The average American or European who has personal dealings with these men and enjoys the privilege of knowing them in a social way, will be impressed by their superior qualities. I have met a number of officials and managers connected with the Soviet iron and steel and allied industries with whom I had to discuss and adjust many intricate business projects and I invariably found these men devoted to their work and to the cause, in whose righteousness they firmly believe.

Moral Character of Officials

Their sincerity and fairness have made our business relations entirely satisfactory. I have had no reason to complain or to take issue with any of their actions. As an engineering organization rendering technical assistance in the iron and steel industry of the Soviet Union, we are not expected to extend credit, and being somewhat in the position of salaried employees, we have always found that the Soviet institutions with which we are doing business lived up to their obligations. Misunderstandings, bound to arise in business relations, could invariably be adjusted by personal discussions across the table.

I am convinced of the impeccability of the Soviet officials in power. Graft and bribery, so prevalent prior to the revolution and reaching into the highest governmental circles, do not exist in high places, and if corruption raises its head in the lower strata, it is promptly crushed by the supreme measure of social defense—the death penalty.

In my entire experience I have never met executives and managers who had so complete a disregard of their family life, personal comfort and even their health as did the Soviet executives with whom I came in contact. A working day of eighteen and even twenty hours is the rule rather than the exception. I know one official who, at the age of about forty-five, averages not more than four or five hours of sleep per day. I know another official whose health finally broke down under the continuous grind and strain, so that he frequently fainted in his office, only to appear on the job the following morning. Knowing him well, I once upbraided him because I felt that he was doing wrong in sacrificing his health, that if he were to die in the prime of life it would be difficult to replace him. He looked at me and, without any attempt at dramatization, quietly responded that if he should die, a gravestone would be reared for him with the epitaph: "Here lies Michael Nikitich Buroff. He died fulfilling his duty."

This devotion and extraordinary capacity for

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work among the executives whom I met—and I believe that they are only typical examples—are doubtless the result of their earlier revolutionary activities and are caused by what someone called an almost religious fervor. There are but a limited number of trustworthy party members available whose qualifications fit them for the higher responsible positions in government and industry, and this knowledge influences their attitude toward their work. It is not at all unusual for the higher executives to occupy several positions simultaneously. Their emoluments—at present about one hundred and fifty dollars per month—are so meager and the prerogatives enjoyed by virtue of their position so limited, that neither lust for money nor the gratification of personal desire can be their motives.

Soviet Self-criticism

There has been much criticism, both oral and printed, of the management of Soviet enterprises. The usual verdict is that management on the whole is incompetent and inefficient. Certain foreign publications are usually filled with accounts of Soviet mismanagement. Such stories, unless willfully fabricated, are largely based on statements published in the Soviet press. Communist newspapers abound with candid and often withering articles hauling managements over the coals, uncovering abuses, denouncing mistakes and fulminating against absurdities and stupidities perpetrated.

The Soviet press wields as great power as that of other countries, if not greater. Reporters are on the job twenty-four hours a day trying to make scoops. I remember being with a party of high officials of an American manufacturer visiting a certain factory in Leningrad in 1929. We were accompanied by one of the high governmental officials from Moscow. The American executive criticized rather freely and openly some of the practices he saw. That night the government official returned to Moscow and I called on him in his official salon car about half an hour before train time. While discussing some questions in connection with our company's work, a somewhat wild-eyed newspaper reporter rushed in and insisted on interviewing the Moscow official concerning the criticisms that had been made by the American, rumors of which had reached his ear. He insisted on a detailed explanation and confirmation which he wanted to telephone to his newspaper at once, so that the bad news might be published in the morning throughout the length and breadth of the land. It took considerable ingenuity and diplomacy to get rid of him.

The Soviet press devotes much space to denunciations by its readers, and the correspondence column is not only part of every issue but has become almost a sacred institution. This is called "self-criticism." The practice is thoroughly in harmony with Bolshevik tenets. It opens the door to a public airing of the real or imaginary grievances of workers and party members.

Bureaucracy and Sabotage

The bane of all large organizations is also in evidence in the Soviet Union—bureaucracy. Although it is fought at every step, this evil is at present a heavy drag on Soviet institutions. Bureaucracy means rigid routine, red tape, delays and waste, and unless the Soviet government succeeds in controlling it, the best intentions and plans may be hampered or even frustrated. As long as bureaucracy, indifference and ignorance remain unchecked, construction and manufacturing costs, and hence the cost of living, will stay high and the quality of consumers' goods remain low.

Another source of danger is disloyalty, mischief-making, wrecking and sabotage by a dwindling number of engineers and professors. The worst aspect of the matter is that they are the very people who have education, knowledge and experience in technical and scientific matters. They are counter-revolutionists, and counter-revolutionary activity is the most heinous crime in the Soviet code.

The majority of the older, experienced engineers are naturally not of proletarian origin, but disciples of the ancient regime. It is easy to understand why these engineers, who formerly occupied high positions and enjoyed wealth and the prerogatives of the then privileged class, could not or would not become adjusted to the new orientation, which deprived them of their most cherished possessions. Many of them were convinced that the Soviet government would sooner or later be overthrown, and that they would regain their former positions after the overthrow. They felt that passive resistance or active interference could endanger and might defeat the Five Year Plan. The government officials, trusting these men and their advice and, moreover, lacking any technical knowledge, found it difficult to uncover and frustrate the insidious schemes of these marplots.

Judging from personal experience, I am entirely satisfied that much deliberate wrecking has been going on. In retrospect I can better understand and evaluate certain occurrences which at the time seemed unfathomable and peculiar. Stupid delays for which there seemed no excuse, unexplainable, expensive and belated changes in projects, extravagant rules, silly regulations and many other similar happenings, were straws indicating whence the wind was blowing.

The Soviet government, aware of this inherent weakness of the technical position of its industries, embraced some four years ago the policy of engaging foreign technical assistance. Foreign engineers have no axe to grind, and the Soviet government knows—or should know—that they are not interested in politics. True to the ideals and ethical standards of their profession, they will work loyally to create and rear engineering works

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that will help to eliminate the waste of human and material energies.

The bad mistakes and serious blunders made are not, however, solely due to deliberate wrecking. Many are the result of ignorance, irresponsibility and the lack of training and experience. Conservatism and a belief that new-fangled ideas are wrong are also to blame. Although the Soviet government firmly believes that the industries of their country must be developed along American lines, and although the superiority of American machinery and equipment is acknowledged, it sometimes taxes one's patience to induce some Russian engineers, foremen and workers to adopt American methods and devices to speed up and cheapen construction.

I have been asked frequently whether the Soviet government will succeed in carrying out the Five Year Plan. While this may be anybody's guess, I believe that with the progress heretofore made, the Five Year Plan will in general be fulfilled. Circumstances may cause individual industries to fall behind, but other measures also embraced in the Five Year Plan will be carried out with a considerable margin.

The Five Year Plan is an economic measure, but in course of time it has acquired a certain political significance. This political aspect is given undeserved importance by the outside world. It is widely believed that failure to complete the Five Year Plan in the allotted time will mean defeat for the Soviet government. Such ideas have no basis in fact. I believe that should the pressure become too great and lack of capital and credits too serious, the program will merely be slowed up and the time extended. I further believe that if the gigantic Five Year Plan were only 75-percent completed by the end of 1933, a remarkable technical and managerial feat, unparalleled in the world's history, will have been achieved.

H. J. Freyn.

Still Unvexed Bermoothes

Notes on a Journey to the Eighteen-Eighties

IT WAS Shakespeare, of course, who started the current popularity of Bermuda. He wrote, in "The Tempest," the first advertising material about it, copy which the inhabitants of that magical archipelago are still content to use—since they are true Britons and therefore proud of being behind the times. And since they are true Britons, it is also characteristic of them that they are never archaic without a reason.

Everyone has heard that automobiles are not permitted in Bermuda. No one, until he goes there, can have any conception of the importance of that simple negative fact. For the automobile, however many the blessings it may have brought us, is also the very heart of the hideous uproar of modern American life. Those who visit Bermuda when they are tired (and the Bermudians shrewdly anticipate that most of their guests will be in that classification) discover with sudden amazement and pleasure that automobiles are a large part of what is wrong with them. They step across the gangplank and into an absurd old victoria, drawn by one or two lazy horses, driven by a genial, fat, probably aged Negro whose voice is soft enough for Hawaii. The only traffic encountered (one passes nothing, it is considered rude) as this equipage plods along the dusty coral roads, under the palms and past the hot, still lagoons, is other, equally somnolent victorias, and a mosquito-fleet of bicycles. Most of the riders are elderly, fat and female, sitting erect and making a breathless six miles an hour. By day, the only sound is the occasional tinkle of a bicycle bell, or a short and strangulated yodel from a driver about to turn a corner; by night even these noises are absent, bicycles and carriages alike being equipped with gently flickering oil lamps, about as effective as the tip of a lighted cigarette—which is quite enough, for Bermuda. This sluggish traffic moves through a lush semi-tropical park, spattered with the pink or yellow cubes of houses made of coral blocks and designed (some of them a hundred years ago) in the best modern style of the Salon des Refusés of 1931.

To the visitor who is only forty-eight hours away from Columbus Circle, New York, or sixty-eight from Chicago's Loop, the effect of this is unbelievably assuaging. He leans back and relaxes all over for the first time in months, feeling perhaps that he has been transported to some muted paradise or—if he is forty or older—back to the days of his childhood without the concomitant miseries. His "cure" begins thirty seconds after he has left the ship, and continues until, on the return voyage, his ship moves up New York harbor and he sees the stalagmites of her buildings, at once the symbol and the partial cause of that civilization-disease from which he fled.

Lotos, Table d'Hote

Whatever the reason for people's going to Bermuda, they do go. In the past twelve months, depression or no, the number of arrivals has passed 50,000. They spent on steamer fares at least five million dollars, and their expenditures while on

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shore were not less than another five million. Not so bad for the 15,000 white Bermudians, who of course retain the normal Nordic percentage of the profits.

The one thing which Bermuda is trying to do to its tourist trade is to keep it from growing too fast. Hitherto the island has been developed in the main by native capital, and they propose to continue the delightful practice of themselves pocketing such profits as are forthcoming. New hotels are being built, but not at the mushroom speed which is normal for international capitalism once it gets hold of a Good Thing. Demand is held down, so far as possible, to keep the laggard pace of supply.

My vocal friends the single-taxers, bless their hearts, might well incorporate Bermuda into their oratory. No off-islander is permitted to buy land there without a special act of the legislature; and they have a canny way of making sure that he is not trying to speculate in realty before permitting him to buy, and of keeping down the permitted acreage to the amount he obviously needs. Such profiteering as there is, benefits Bermuda pockets; and the islanders have never learned the real technique of hoggishness. Housing congestion is as lacking as are the horrible "developments" which infest the outskirts of American cities. The wasted opportunities must make go-getting American visitors weep; I hope they do.

The High Cost of Museums

The Pax Bermudiana is no accident. It is maintained with deep foresight by the citizens of that place, who make their living almost solely from the tourists and propose that it shall be bigger and better. Every time the colonial legislature meets, the devilish advance agents of gasoline renew their efforts to bring the island and its satellite atolls within the orbit of their deadly fumes, which may now be smelled everywhere else in the once-civilized world. Cunningly they argue for an opening wedge: Let others remain under the interdict but permit the doctors only to have cars, for their swift errands of mercy. All this of course is a nonsensical pretext. No one is ever ill in the blessed Bermoothes; the doctors make their living by gambling with one another on their golf games. The first two roaring, noisome road-beetles which get free in this Elysium will breed others, until in a twinkling the roads are choked with them. Then will the highways be lined with the unpainted shacks of Ye Olde Hotdoggerie, with signs admonishing you to Keep Kissable with Nonox Petrol, and with traffic signs advising you to wait on red in this repulsive spot until with green you may advance to yonder nauseating vicinity. In short, then Bermuda will be On the Map, a real Go-gettery Place.

It is the people interested in tourist traffic, controlling through their superior economic interest, who have thus far averted the calamity. They have seen Nantucket, which once had a similar ban, ruined and desolated from the day when the first Ford thrust its adenoidal snout up the beach; they know that the scarcer peace becomes, the more dearly will people pay for it. And they are willing to suffer a little themselves as a counterpoint. Their spokesman in Hamilton (briskly efficient for Bermuda, and with a quiet courtesy unknown to his brothers in American Chambers of Commerce) pointed out to me that since carriages of the sort Bermuda wants are no longer manufactured anywhere, they must now be collected in various parts of the world, one by one, with as much care as Henry I of Detroit displays in gathering up the detritus of the civilization which he more than anyone else has caused to vanish. Each carriage now costs one and a half times as much as a low-priced automobile; and each, as it approaches valetudinarianism, is tended with solicitude in the hope that it will at least equal the record of Holmes's one-hoss shay. The oil lamps for bicycles are likewise going the path of the bison and the wild pigeon; and already one sees the beginning of that daring innovation, the electric torch. (Until it came along, the latest mechanical gadget to monopolize dinner-table conversation was the coasterbrake.)

What Depression?

The whimsical visitor will argue that since Bermuda has only got as far along as, say, 1888, it is hardly surprising that she does not yet know about the depression of 1929 to 1937. The natives will dispute this, with a wry smile: they are aware of hard times, although of course their people are undergoing no such misery as is enjoyed by 15 or 20 percent of the population of a really great country, such as the United States. But certainly, life in the hotels goes on as though the great bull market of 1928 were still in progress. These expensively dressed people have money in their pockets; they give every evidence of being free from care. Their languid conversation as they eat their large, dull table d'hote meals discusses golf, how was the water today, shall we go to the cinema in Hamilton. Their attitude supports the thesis that it is only the poor who really suffer in hard times; for others the sacrifice is in having one car instead of two, or visiting Bermuda and not the Riviera. Certainly, if capitalist civilization is tottering to its fall, the news has not reached these sunburned lotos-eaters. If they have ever heard of Russia, they have forgotten about it, though it would not be surprising to hear one of them say something about nationalization of women.

Hurrah for Our Tariff (in Part)!

Bermuda lies within the British Empire and still clings to the old-fashioned notion of free trade. Bermuda merchants can import clothing, jewelry, perfumes and various "novelties" and sell them at

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prices substantially lower than are possible inside the *cordon insanitaire* of the American tariff. Therefore, one of the pleasures the female tourist promptly discovers is buying in Hamilton's charmingly English shops the sort of apparel which is so alluring and inexpensive in London, so hideously costly in the snobbish places on upper Fifth Avenue. As far as this inexpert purchaser could discover, Bermuda prices are appropriate to her geography, about half-way between Sandy Hook and Land's End. But they are low enough to make the visitor realize firmly that he is being robbed by Mr. Hoover's new tariff law; and if I were the Republican National Chairman, my first act would be to enact a codicil to that statute prohibiting Americans from setting foot on such a shore of disillusionment.

Do the Bermudians, thus enabled to earn an honest sixpence extra in the pound, sing aloud the praises of Messrs. Hawley and Smoot? They do not. They tell you a little coldly that these gentlemen destroyed at a stroke the whole agriculture of Bermuda, which had been built upon the export of fruits and vegetables to the hungry Americans. Now they are making a somewhat dismal new start with Canada, and in the meantime every good Bermudian is careful to replenish his vitamins daily with island vegetables, which are picked out with a special star on all the hotel menus. The star signifies, if you must know, something unspeakable in good society about the national policies of the United States.

Young Drunkards

Among the passengers on board the reliable and pleasant "Pan-America" (adjectives which are only partly due to the fact that the writer got a Good Stateroom) are a group of college boys and girls, intent on getting a rest. Naturally, since they are exhausted by a winter of hard study, they stay up all night, sleep an hour or two and then begin again, rollicking like a group of hyperthyroid kittens, each sex having an effect on the other like catnip. Most of them are as nice-mannered and pleasant youngsters as you could care to see; but 30 percent of the boys and 10 percent of the girls still believe in the now outmoded slogan, It's Smart to Be Soused. They spend their voyage (and their time on shore in Bermuda) drinking in an unskilled manner. They order the wrong things at the wrong times of day; they guzzle when they ought to sip, and contrariwise; they get sick and fight it down and go on drinking. The college girl of 1931, by and large, is an adorably pretty creature, but the most liberal esthete could not admire her as she sits in the ship's bar, wisps of stringy hair about her face, her raincoat all awry, her complexion distinctly on the greenish side, trying to be a hedonist and perfectly miserable in the process. Looking at the Young Drunkards, one feels violently ashamed of their parents, who so obviously don't know how to live and have been unable to teach their offspring the art.

Capone and Walker, Please Don't Write

Just how far Bermuda is behind the times is indicated by the fact that with a permanent population of 30,000 and many thousands of visitors, she has practically no crime, no municipal or other scandals, no racketeering, no discernible problem of wild (native) youth. Half her residents are Negroes, but no lynchings occur. Executions (for murder only) take place at the un-Chicago rate of about two a century, and the authorities obligingly hanged the last two at opposite ends of the island so that both districts might have a tragic spot to show the visitors. The island's two recurring forms of criminality are riding a bicycle at night without a light, and what my friend Peggy from Texas indignantly called croolty to hosses. From the stern manner in which these two types of misbehavior are punished, it is evident that Bermuda's crime wave is on the wane.

Next Pasture Grass

The boatman who takes you sailing in his pretty little sloop, out through Crow Lane Harbor into Great Sound, is a bronzed son of Bermuda, born and reared there. He knows every hidden rock, and flips his tiller over dexterously so that they brush by on either side to make the ladies give the proper squeaks of gratified half-terror, knowing themselves to be actually secure behind his male competence. He sails all day between blue sky and bluer water, earns a good living, and retires in the evening to a pink-coral cubicle all complete with adoring English wife and a row of well behaved English children.

His boatload of tourists slips past an inbound steamer, her rails lined with the grubby white faces of passengers fresh from bad air, artificial light and nervous tension Somewhere in America. The people in the sloop on the other hand are blistered red and peeling with five days' sun, and the contrast between the two consignments causes a general chuckle.

"That's our ship," says one of the blistered ones. "Sailing on her tomorrow."

The boatman, bored and nonchalant, looks up with an interest which remains undulled though it is obvious that he must have had occasion to express it many times before.

"Back to the States!" he says in the quiet Bermudian voice, with its only faint Anglicism. "I certainly wish I were going." And while you look at him with incredulity he adds:

"That's the place! I may be able to manage it in a year or two. . . . You ought to hear how well I can bring in WJZ on my radio. I haven't missed Amos and Andy a single night in three months. . . ."

Bruce Bliven.

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My Brother Commits Suicide

A WEEK ago today my brother, utterly disheartened by his prolonged search for employment, went to his lonely room in a shabby hotel in Texas and blew his brains out. After nearly thirty years of toil as a college professor, I myself had great difficulty in raising the money to pay for a modest kind of burial befitting the gentleman that my brother was. I could not go to his funeral; I could not pay for both the burial expenses and the railway fare. So he was interred without ceremony, although I understand that the undertaker provided four pallbearers and mumbled a few words at the grave.

At almost the same minute that my brother killed himself in that far-away border town, there died within five miles of my home a man possessed of twenty millions of dollars. My brother died without a friend or even an acquaintance near him; my neighbor, the multimillionaire, was surrounded by three of the world's greatest medical specialists, three highly trained nurses and a number of sympathetic and highly expectant friends.

This sudden, tragic death of my brother has brought to me during the past week some strange thoughts, such as had never before entered into the quiet routine of my academic life. Dark questionings have been forcing themselves upon me in spite of my efforts to push them back—questionings that leave a bitter taste in my mouth—questionings that seem to make my heart, my *physical* heart, bruised and sore.

My brother was a skilled man in his line of work, the selling of certain types of fixtures and supplies. His knowledge should have been, and doubtless was, of genuine value in industry and commerce. He had worked hard and was willing even to the last to work hard; but the moment that the present business crisis caused a slackening of orders he was "laid off," dropped from the pay roll, cast forth, like a worn-out beast of burden, to find his food and shelter wherever he could.

I have said that my brother was useful and a man anxious to toil for his living. The multimillionaire who died at almost the same moment had never in all his existence created values by his own labor. Inheriting a fortune in lands and buildings, he simply waited until the years inevitably added immense values to that property. He lived in pleasantness all the days of his life; my brother, worn with toil, lay in his own blood on a cheap hotel bed for hours before his body was found.

During the days that have passed since the telegram announcing his death reached me, these questions have been coming to me over and over: Can this be the meaning of American civilization? Is this what our vaunted industrial and commercial efficiency amounts to—that a skilled worker, zealous in his trade or profession, longing to use his knowledge and skill in that trade or profession, should be compelled to choose between only two things—slow starvation or suicide? Can it be that our forefathers—the actual forefathers of my brother and me—should have shed their blood in the American Revolution to produce a nation so barbarously inefficient in its industrial and economic life that one of their descendants must kill himself rather than steal or beg on the streets?

Can it be that after two thousand years of the teaching of the ethics of Jesus of Nazareth, civilization has not yet reached that point where the employer discovers in himself responsibility for his employee? Can it be that in a nation founded on the principle of democratic brotherhood, industrial masters permit men to toil year after year to accumulate profits for them, and then, the moment those profits cease, cast the toilers forth to face humiliating and even death-dealing poverty? Can it be that the master employers of men in vast numbers see no implied contract in their relationships with their laborers?

For there *is* an implied contract in such prolonged relationships—at the very least, the same implied contract that exists between a human being and his old dog or beast of burden. Near my home there roams about in a large vacant lot a stumbling old gray horse. For years that horse was a racer who made thousands of dollars for his owner. And today the ancient nag has nothing to do but stand in the warm sunshine or feebly hobble over to the fence to receive a lump of sugar from his master's loving hand. If the old racer was cast forth to find its own food and shelter, I believe that the neighbors would mob its owner.

Should my brother have been treated less kindly than a beast? He, too, like this gray racer, had made thousands of dollars of profit for his employers. He too had run the race faithfully, earnestly, successfully, as long as there was gain for his boss in the racing. Was it just, was it Christian, was it ordinary humanity, to send him forth to starve when the commercial and industrial racing had temporarily ceased? Was there not, in the sight of God, a contract between my brother's employer and himself, that since he had served so well in the days of prosperity, the great corporation should at least grant him bread and shelter in evil days?

These are some of the thoughts, the sorrowful questionings, that have been occurring to me, a quiet college professor, since a Texas undertaker, an utter stranger to me, telegraphed that my brother, "without funds," had committed suicide. Within a few days my college teaching will commence again. Once more I shall go into the classroom and attempt to explain to the students the high ideals of brotherhood in Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." Once more I shall try to impress upon

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these young souls the sense of brotherly obligation expressed in George Eliot's "Adam Bede." Once more I shall endeavor to lecture on the visions of a better and nobler and kinder civilization revealed in poet, novelist and dramatist. But all the time, I fear, I shall be seeing the cheap coffin of my brother—a suicide for lack of work—lowered by four strangers into a barren grave in a far-off Texas town. All the while, I fear, I shall harbor the bitter thought that he, my toiling brother, was a martyr to the blundering, cruelly inefficient industrial system of our day.

My brother calls from his lonely grave in Texas. He calls to me and to all of us to arouse ourselves from the spiritual torpor into which our industrialism has permitted us to fall and to face the bitter fact that, in spite of our gestures of philanthropy and our bland talk of Christian brotherhood, the law of the jungle still prevails in our industrial and commercial world. He calls to all thoughtful Americans to realize that they who hold in their hands the power of life and death for American workmen have not yet gained such love for their fellow men as to risk financial loss for its sake.

My brother, after life's fitful dream, sleeps well. I find some consolation in that thought. And one other thought gives me some comfort. He, perhaps, and other victims like him, have not died in vain. For it may be that only in the presence of tragic death do we realize that human life, human happiness, human souls, are of more value than profits in dollars. Perhaps through my brother's martyrdom and that of thousands of others who have been crushed to death under the vast rollers of our aimlessly wandering economic system, the world of industry and commerce may yet be roused to the fact that business should exist, not to create mere goods, but to create for all men the opportunity to live, and that more abundantly.

ENGLISH 12 A.

The facts related in this article are true. For obvious reasons, the author prefers not to publish his name—THE EDITORS.

DREAM

(The supposed prophecies of love came early to Bill. And a ripe woman saw in him things which were true or not, according to what he later became. But this is the record of what she dreamed, which was the essence of what she saw.)

There was one who cherished Bill,
Thinking it was a glory in his head
And not a fault which kept him wandering.
One night she dreamed and in the morning came
And lying on his bed told him her dream—

"It seemed you were the gayest fool
Who was ever robbed in drunkenness,
And I saw you robbed.
There was a flowering road
And houses for a love-like harlotry;
And women while you laughed divided you
With the narrow trick of love.

"You went along the road and I followed you
To a bare plateau and there the road was crossed,
And an old bitch sat there telling life with cards.
The sucked-out light in that place came
From a dead sun or my soul, I do not know;
But there you did not stop.
And I still followed you expectantly.

"And I came to your own house and there you were,
Not drunk, no longer gay, but a man so stern
That your eyes glowed coldly like acetylene.
And you said, 'What is it that you want?'
And I said, 'Your heart.'
You turned then to a curtain on the wall
Which you pulled aside and said, 'It appears like this.'
There was a great black tree with snakes for roots
And far away a mountain of black ice
Which melting down fed water to the snakes.
When one of these stretched out to nuzzle me
I knew that serpent was myself.

"You said, 'Is that your choice?' And I said, 'Yes.'
You opened up your breast then wearily
Took out your heart and laid it in my hands.
And when I asked what was the consequence
'It is all the same to me,' your cold mouth said.
And then the flushed intention came to me
That I should now redeem your stolen goods.

"So that is what I did along the road
By the brothels of those undetected thieves,
Trading with ghostly women for your past.
And I bargained bitterly,
But in the end when the whole heart had been spent
I had nothing of you in my hands
But a mirror which would not reflect my face.
They gave me that for my piecemeal bargaining
And I brought it back and I held the mirror up
Until it caught your eyes and reflected once
That gleaming way of yours
Which was never stolen and we could not touch.

"I had been useless and I would have gone,
But you laid a tolerant hand upon my arm
And your house was warm around me like a fire.
And a flame grew in my body and the wind
Increasing in my blood fanned at the flame
And I was melted to humility."

The drowsy Bill heard this and he was amazed,
But only said, "I do not know such things."
And he turned in bed and was immersed in sleep.

PHELPS PUTNAM.

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Chain Stores: Menace or Promise?

IV: *The Case Against the Chain Stores Examined*

IN A PREVIOUS article in this series I quoted figures from several studies of comparative prices in chain and independent stores which seem to prove that chain grocery stores as a class maintain a lower price level for their goods than independent grocery stores do. But before going any farther into the subject, let me indicate some other vital facts which these studies revealed.

First, some chains sell cheaper than others; but their prices differ to such a slight degree that an observer can group them into a definite price class quite distinct from the independents. Second, the independents must be grouped on a number of different price levels, there being a spread of more than 20 percent between the prices of the most efficient and the most inefficient. Third, these price levels of independents are not determined by types of stores and services rendered. There are credit-and-delivery independents which sell very much cheaper than some cash-and-carry independents. While there are no definite facts to support the statement, it is probably true that the price groups in the independents are determined rather by the size or turnover of the store than by anything else. Fourth, the highest-priced chain store was cheaper than the lowest-priced independent. Fifth, there are independents whose prices are very close to the prices of the average chain. But they are very few in number, and while their prices approximate those of the average chain store, they are considerably higher than the prices of the most efficient chains.

Now this much is certain: that some independents can operate as cheaply as some chains. If this is true, why cannot the independents solve the problem of economical food distribution as well as the chains? The answer seems obvious.

After all, a few efficient independent groceries cannot handle the problem of food distribution. As matters stand, the grocery business is pretty much of a neighborhood affair. It takes a great many groceries to supply food to the whole population. In Louisville, Kentucky, for instance, it was discovered that there were 1,357 retail grocery stores. Of what advantage to the customers in Louisville are small, high-priced grocers, if there are two or three hundred efficient independents and a thousand inefficient high-priced ones? Though chain stores differ in policy and price and management, their differences are not so great as those among independents. The chain units are usually sufficiently large to do a business of about $40,000 a year. The independents range, as I have shown, all the way from $5,000 a year to several hundred thousand. Two-thirds of them will be under $25,000 a year. Now, the difference between these independents is not just a difference measured in gross dollars and cents, for there is the more important difference in their managers. One manager may be intelligent, capable, industrious, a good manager, a good merchant, while another may be slovenly, unintelligent, without capital, training or executive ability. He will never make his store into a successful business. The records prove this. I have already mentioned the fact that 45 percent of the groceries fail in the first year, that by the end of the second year 60 percent have departed and only five out of a hundred are in business at the end of eight years. In other words, the vast majority of the small independent grocery keepers are utterly incompetent. Now the point I wish to make is that in a thousand chain stores, the brains and management reside, not in the individual store, but in the central office. Specialists in buying, advertising, display, accounting, selling and so on, can project their managerial ability into each of the thousand stores. Every one of these stores is certain to receive intelligent management. In a thousand independent stores less than 25 percent will be well managed. The other 75 percent will not only be badly managed, but nothing can be done to save them. There is no way in which they can be made efficient.

One of the great chain-grocery systems has 17,000 stores, each of which enjoys the intelligent management of the central office. The people who trade with them receive the benefit of the prices resulting from this management. Now suppose we take any group of 17,000 independent stores. Some of them—say 4,000—will be under control of efficient merchants, but the balance will be in the hands of helplessly inefficient merchants all of whom are traveling rapidly to bankruptcy. The efficient management of the 4,000 astute merchants will in no wise include the 13,000 unwise ones, and the customers of the 13,000 stores will be the victims. The inability of the independent-grocery system to extend its management is, I think, the rock on which it will founder.

This statement would seem to indicate a belief that the independent grocer is doomed. I think that inefficient small grocers are doomed, for they will be forced out of business by their own ineptitude. But at present it is possible, as fast as bankruptcy mows them down, for crowds of newcomers to step into their shoes and become bankrupts themselves. I think the system which makes this possible

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will be-destroyed by the independent-grocery trade itself. Wholesalers have learned that there is not much profit in selling goods to small-scale, inefficient retailers. The Department of Commerce has demonstrated that they lose money on every dollar of an order for less than fifteen dollars, and it has been also shown that most of their orders are for less than ten dollars each. It has already been suggested that wholesalers grant no credit to retail grocers who do an annual business of less than $40,000. This policy was not adopted, but there is a strong movement in its direction. The parasitic small dealer injures his efficient independent competitor more than he injures the chain. The efficient independent retailer, therefore, is interested in his extinction, and the wholesalers have begun to find that he is a source of loss rather than of profit. In the reorganization of the wholesale business, therefore, it is probable that in the near future it will not be so easy for these small, ill equipped, ill financed grocers to start in business.

Then there is the smaller percentage of sound independents. I see nothing now which justifies the conclusion that they will cease to exist. But the old system of merchandising under which they operated will cease to exist. Indeed, it has already. For many years there will probably be a place for these independents. In the next article, I will describe what these men are doing to protect themselves and meet their problems, but at present it is sufficient to say that they need no protection from laws or champions. They have learned the modern art of food merchandising from the chains and are to that extent better off. And they will in time rid themselves of the losses and handicaps in trade which they suffer because of the existence of so many parasitic small competitors. In other words, there is no need of wasting a lot of perfectly good tears over the independents. The intelligent independents are taking effective measures to protect themselves and the unintelligent ones cannot be saved anyway.

The chains are charged with various abuses and there are grounds, perhaps, for pressing some of them. One of these so-called abuses is the policy of using "loss leaders." I do not know whether that is an abuse or not. It is a purely promotional scheme. It is done for the purpose of getting the customer into the store. It may have the effect of creating an impression that all goods in the store are as cheap as the leader, which is always some well advertised product whose price is known to the housewife. To this extent it is a deception.

However, the loss-leader charge which is usually made against the chains is that they fool the people with an extremely low price on a few nationally advertised articles and then swindle them by asking excessive prices for staple goods. This charge is completely exploded by the studies whose results I presented in the last article. This does not justify the loss-leader practice. But it is a practice which is used as much by independents as by chains; it is a practice which has been used by merchants for many decades.

Another charge is that the chain store drains the town of its funds. A theory exists that all the money paid to a local merchant remains in town, while that paid to a chain goes elsewhere. This, of course, is founded on a false assumption. As a matter of fact, I think it can be demonstrated that the little local independent grocer drains more money out of the town than the chain does.

Consider, for example, how the town's money goes for a can of Campbell's soup. The customer buys a can for ten cents at an independent store. What now becomes of this ten cents? Does the grocer keep it and spend it in town? He most certainly does not. He keeps two cents of it for himself and sends the other eight cents to the wholesaler. If the wholesaler happens to have his office in the town itself, half a cent will remain there, but the rest will go out of town to the manufacturer. Thus, out of the consumer's ten cents, only two and a half cents remain in town. If the wholesaler is an out-of-town merchant, then the whole eight cents leaves the vicinity. In the first case the two and a half cents kept by the local wholesaler and retailer will be distributed by them in rent, salaries, delivery, interest, light, taxes and other expenses and profit. It will for the most part remain in the town.

Now, suppose that the customer takes his ten cents to a chain store. He will pay eight cents to the chain salesman for his can of soup and keep two cents himself. This two cents will remain in town, where it will be spent, just as it would be if the customer had given the ten cents to a local grocer who purchased his goods from an out-of-town wholesaler. The only difference is that the customer has the two cents instead of the grocer. But what becomes of the eight cents paid to the chain store? Does it all go out of town? Of course not. A percentage of it must remain there to cover such local expenses as rent, salaries, taxes, light, etc. This portion amounts to 10 or 11 per-cent. Accepting the lower figure, we find that of eight cents collected by the chain store, seven and two-tenths cents go out of town to the central office. Of the ten cents collected by the independent grocer, at least seven and five-tenths cents go out of town.

Another charge brought against the chains is that they lack civic consciousness, that they have no interest in the town, do not contribute to its charities or its activities and that their managers do not constitute a group of leaders comparable to the town's independent merchants. This is or is not a just criticism according to the way one approaches the subject of community welfare work and community leadership. If you think that community charity should be a by-product of merchandising, then the criticism is sound. If you think that the welfare work of the town should be supported by the citizens and not by levies on the merchants, then

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the criticism will not hold. I, for one, do not think merchants should be taxed to support town charities. I think merchants should confine themselves to intelligent, efficient merchandising. I think they should feel as much interest in the town's affairs as any other citizens, but not merely because they are merchants. However, let me suggest that this argument has only a slight application to the grocery-store field. How great a contribution to the town's welfare is made, do you suppose, by that 90 percent of grocers whose gross is under $50,000 a year and who barely extract a living from their business? As for the 80 percent whose gross is under $25,000, most of them are rather subjects for the town's welfare work than contributors to it.

As for the chains contributing no civic leaders to the town, this criticism of the chain store may be a sound one. For my part, I should welcome a reorganization of our commercial society on lines which would tend to submerge the importance and influence of the merchant class. The town will quickly develop other leaders of a very different sort once the power of the merchant is curtailed. But in the grocery field, the independent grocer threatened by the chain is not usually someone who plays any part in the leadership of the town.

The reader must not assume that I have any notion that the chain stores are in business for the benefit of the public. These institutions are in the hands of men who are engaged in their operations primarily for the sake of profit. I defend no individual chain system. I merely think that we have more or less blundered into a method of distribution which can save billions of dollars a year to the American public, expand its purchasing power, and thus create new outlets from this amazingly efficient producing machine of ours which seems to be producing too much merely because our people haven't the money to buy all they need and all that they would like to have.

The chains should be studied, encouraged and watched. They are capable of developing great abuses. The perfect type has perhaps not yet been determined. We must decide whether or not the national chain is better than the regional or local chain. We must find out if the chains themselves are being prevented from developing their full social usefulness. But above all, we must assure ourselves, when the chains develop and the merger process sets in on a large scale, that the distribution of our food does not fall into the hands of a virtual monopoly. If a few big national chains should gain control of all the food stores, they might very easily end competition by secret agreements among themselves. We must be vigilant to prevent this. We must also watch the mergers in order to keep the chains from falling under the dominion of the baleful holding-company device. And, of course, we must also see that the utility of the chain as a distributing machine is not imperiled or destroyed by stock-promotion schemes and all the numerous devices so well known to our versatile and clever financial exploiters.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

In the fifth and final article in this series Mr. Flynn will discuss chain-store policies as they affect the consumer, and describe some successful adaptations of chain-store policies to the needs of independent retailers.—THE EDITORS.

Who Cares About Architecture?

ONE DAY last fall I had to make a trip around town on a truck. As we were going up Lexington Avenue, the driver slowed down and leaned out, twisting his head dubiously toward heaven. "Yeah," he said, "take that Chrysler Building there. It looks pretty swell now, but give it a year and I'm tellin' you, lady . . . it'll be *obsolete*."

This prediction turns out to have been on the whole conservative. The Chrysler Building still continues to rise every morning before the Long Island commuter like a premonition of madness, but already we have much higher, sweller and more obsolescent buildings. And even the immediate future is nowhere in sight. Radio City will no doubt be the Biggest Thing yet conceived by man. And the hardened eyes that still remain in their sockets will be permanently knocked out at last by the World's Fair in Chicago. Controversy will continue to rage in every quarter. Is the Empire State by moonlight more gorgeous than the Daily News Building seen in a mist from the topmost nook of the St. George Hotel (or vice versa)? Is it quite moral to have an oval building in Radio City? (Note: It probably isn't.) Is the World's Fair Egyptian, Paris of 1925 or just Modernistic? People like to get these things straight.

But meanwhile, where is Architecture? Is there any and can there be any? Perhaps one should be clear about this: I mean by architecture, real architecture, the clear and consistent expression of a social order that people can make out of their physical environment, for their own satisfaction. Real architecture is never competitive. It does not advertise anything, least of all the individual idiosyncrasies and inhibitions of the architect. It is the one art that must be a social expression—impersonal, anonymous, achieving its effects by adhering to time and place and function, by large harmony, by an orderly sense of the whole in each small unit. But never by that specious conception of variety which means "one each," in other words, samples. The history of good building could, and should, be written without mentioning the name, habits or personal convictions of a single architect.

In the midst of all this public talk, this new consciousness, what evidence is there that anyone is really interested in architecture, in buildings harmonious in space and time? How many of the

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craning necks carry four-dimensional minds? Or even honest eyes? Is there really even a chance for intelligent controversy?

There are at the moment two public architectural exhibitions running in New York. The one at the Grand Central Palace is the biennial Exposition of Architectural and Allied Arts. It is an unbelievable hodge-podge, its only unity being derived from a general atmosphere of impoverishment due to the comparative scarcity of industrial exhibits and the usual lack of technical perfection in model-making and photography. By contrast, the recent no-jury show of the Society of Independent Artists was a triumph of harmony. The usual smug houses alternate with already overfamiliar exhibitionist office buildings. Most of the houses are British or French. Most of the office buildings are modernistic. Everything is "distinctive," except perhaps the offices of government. All the exhibits are plumped down together, eyeing the public defensively and arrogantly like entrants in a beauty contest. I do not remember one single evidence of activity or interest in town planning. The examples of industrial housing are excellent—but one is Swedish and the other Russian. One, and only one, exhibit displays any curiosity whatsoever about the modern possibilities in a type solution for small dwellings. This is Mr. Kocher's aluminum house, built full-size from standard materials, completely and economically functional. It is a fine and stimulating piece of work and well worth the seventy-five-cent admission and even the general chaos.

For the rest—even the industrial exhibits confuse modernism with preciosity. The aluminum people, who might well have seized the opportunity to exhibit the possibilities of Mr. Kocher's house as a unit for large community development, gave us instead an exhibit in the manner of a Modernique Perfume Shoppe.

The other exhibition is at 903 Seventh Avenue. It is, according to the catalogue, "An exhibition organized by architects whose models were not accepted for the current Architectural League Show." The Rejected Architects have, at the last minute, done very well by themselves. Their work is in what they call the International style. To quote from the catalogue again: "The design depends primarily on the function which the building is to serve without consideration of traditional principles of symmetry. . . . The style takes advantage of new principles of construction and new materials such as concrete, steel and glass."

The most striking thing about these models and photographs is that the designers have apparently no distinguishing or competitive tricks. Some are without doubt more competent than others—but as the eye roves over the exhibits, one does not stop to exclaim. Instead one goes on—visualizes whole communities, whole cities, made of buildings like these, each unit bearing an orderly relation to the others, each perfectly and wastelessly functional in itself. One is perhaps disappointed to find no large plan on the walls to facilitate such activity, but there can be little doubt that these architects have such plans in their minds.

The best thing in the show is a model of three houses for a housing development. The architects, Clauss and Daub, have taken the fine modern plan of Radburn, New Jersey, by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, and replaced the faintly Old English houses with frank, clean, rectilinear units of concrete and glass. For anyone who cries "monotonous" at the principles of modern architecture, the fine and subtle balance achieved in these three small houses by the slight rearrangement of standardized units should be a conclusive object lesson.

Discipline, and the acceptance of common materials, common principles of construction, mutual ideal conceptions, are the very soul of our possible architecture. But there is still, though perhaps necessarily at this stage of the game, a trifle too much of the manifesto spirit. There is always some danger of human values being temporarily overlooked when a group of artists have discovered together some fresh truth. "Ornament," one is likely to hear announced at this point, "cannot be allowed in modern architecture." But, as Lewis Mumford says, the only argument against ornament is that we really don't want it. It just naturally doesn't belong in our way of life.

The truth of it is that Advertising Architecture can make the public stare, gape, close its eyes and count ten, swoon, shiver in its boots, glow with vicarious pride in record-breaking cost or height, but it can't really give satisfaction—because it isn't architecture. It may take some time to overcome our long indulged neurotic restlessness, to learn to be satisfied with satisfaction, but if we really want architecture we will do it. And the Rejected Architects, if they keep their picture of the social organism clear before their eyes, will point the way.

CATHERINE K. BAUER.

The Ancestors

The wrinkled cypress wall that stands
  Firm till the edges sleep
Thickens its hold on autumn lands
  Grown heavy, deep on deep.

And he who pauses by the gate
  Feels garden beds grow hard
With certainty that gathers late,
  Wisdom that hopes retard.

The dead leave courage for the mind
  To view earth's massy form
In its identity of kind,
  Clean of the changing worm.

YVOR WINTERS.

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Washington Notes

Organizing the House—Tilson or Snell? Sabotage by the Progressives—No "Deals" Possible

THE MORE one studies the situation created by the death of Nick Longworth, the more apparent it becomes that we are in for a period of unprecedented legislative confusion. Some of the most practical men in both parties with whom I have recently talked are convinced that it may not be possible to organize the next House of Representatives until after the Christmas holidays—which means that for more than a month after its session is supposed to start the House will be unable to do business. This would indeed be an extraordinary state of affairs. Nevertheless, it is possible to contemplate it without undue perturbation. Nothing will be lost, I think, if the House is delayed a month. No homes will be wrecked, but there will be a vast fluttering among the politicians and political publicists, none of whom has ever encountered a similar situation.

When the late Speaker succumbed, it was naturally believed that the honest but humorless Tilson, official Republican floor leader and next in command of the House machine, would succeed him as the caucus selection. This idea was particularly plausible because of Mr. Tilson's doglike devotion to the Hoover administration. Ever since March 4, 1929, he has supported every Hoover interest and he has obeyed White House orders from Walter Newton with an unblinking and unquestioning faith. For these reasons it was assumed that Mr. Tilson would receive strong White House support and that this would be sufficient to put him over.

It now seems that things are not going to work out that way at all. The candidacy of Mr. Bertram Snell considerably messes up the situation. Mr. Snell has not by any means been as regular a supporter of the White House program as Mr. Tilson, but he has stood behind the administration, as did Mr. Longworth, most of the time. The fact is that he followed Nick rather than Newton, and on the bonus loan and one or two other issues he temporarily broke away from the administration. He was a more important cog in the organization than Tilson, and stronger in the House among the regulars. His desire for the speakership puts Mr. Hoover in an embarrassing position and word comes from his "close friends" that in the matter of the caucus nomination for Speaker, the White House will be entirely neutral.

The really important development seems to be the effect of the Tilson-Snell candidacies upon the fifteen or twenty House progressives. Had Longworth lived probably all of them, including Kvale, the Farmer-Labor representative, would have voted for him. They do not feel that way at all about either Snell or Tilson. On the contrary, their candidacies have started a movement for a Western progressive Republican—and the name of Mr. Ramseyer of Iowa is being urged by a considerable number of them.

It is, of course, a futile movement. No one has the least idea that it can succeed. It will serve, however, as a protest against the selection of a hard-boiled conservative of the Snell-Tilson type. It will enable the progressives to render the Republican caucus futile and to delay the organization of the House as long as they want. In the end, I think, they will come in and vote for the caucus nominee because there is nothing else for them to do. They do not want to elect the Democrat, they can't elect one of their own number and they know it would be a mistake to do so if they could.

While of course the individual aspirants for the speakership and the individual members around whom the committee chairmanships revolve are anxious to have their party organize the House, the national leaders of both parties share that feeling to a less degree. For it is evident that the party which assumes the responsibility of organizing will be impotent, helpless and hamstrung, and that it will be without power to enact or prevent legislation.

So clear is this that some of the real political factors in the administration are convinced that the "Chief" will be much better off politically if the Democrats have the speakership. He could then fire back veto after veto and benefit rather than suffer from the legislative chaos. For similar reasons, Democrats of the managerial class will be entirely content to see the Republicans keep nominal control. This situation has one interesting result. It has made it well nigh impossible for the progressives to make a deal with either side, for both parties are convinced that the speakership, hazardous enough under normal conditions, would be too dangerous to assume if concessions have to be made. And so both sides are firmly persuaded that it would be stupid to "deal" and each apparently has determined not to do so. This means that if the Republican loss by death in the next eight months is greater than the Democratic loss, Jack Garner will be chosen Speaker and the Democrats will have the House.

What I think this all indicates is that the progressives and the Farmer-Laborites will make their demonstration, but will be satisfied to accomplish two things: first, to show both regular Republicans and Democrats that they cannot turn a wheel without them; second, to establish themselves as a distinct and functioning organization. At present many of them believe that if the Republican party holds its majority of one, the most convincing way to demonstrate their power will be to keep out of the caucus and delay the organization of the House for a week or so. Finally they will come in and vote for the regular nominee, having made it perfectly clear that they do not approve of him and that their vote only means a desire to get down to business.

Of course, if the Democrats have a majority, the progressives will not be able to keep the House unorganized by staying out of the caucus and presenting their own candidate. All they could gain would be a certain amount of publicity for their protest against the conservatives, but that would be enough. My own feeling is that the regular Republicans eventually will organize the House, but that they will not do so without a great deal of stress, strain and general discomfort. Further, that after they organize, they will be very sorry that they did.

Washington. T. R. B.

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Acting by the Yard

SIGNOR P—— and I are sitting in the drawing-room of this Florentine palace for a while, after the luncheon guests are gone and even the host himself has taken the Milan express. My companion is around seventy, perhaps, educated in many cultures, at home in many lands, charming, suave, packed with the substance of conversation and rich with delight in it. He has known the people in several governments, and has been the friend, too, of numberless authors and artists in three capitals. Among Paris, London and Italy he has floated, in his time, easily and scarcely aware of the change. Now, I gather, he lives more quietly, a taste of Paris perhaps, not very much of London, where the celebrated friends are all dead, and most of the year in Florence and Rome.

We have been talking a little of everything; for in his epoch the art of conversation was a perpetual variation on all themes. He asks me about the new books in America, quotes fragments of things said to him by his dear friend Henry James, and wants to know what the season has been in our theatre this year. Then all of a sudden he is telling me about the *recitazione a braccia.*

Nowadays in the country houses it is the same as everywhere else, he says; nobody wants to do anything but play bridge and dance the new steps; there is no longer any conversation. But in the old days, when he was young, at the family places where people went for their months in the country, it was all different. One of the pastimes was acting.

At night, summer nights and in the early autumn, after dinner, they used to give plays and charades. There was no question as to who could act or not. It was taken for granted; everybody could act. Some one of the party thought out the plot, the scenario, and assigned the characters and the general tone of the piece, after which you improvised your speeches and tricks and filled in the scenes as you liked. It was all according to your spirits and your invention, he says, making it up like that as you went along, filling in the scenes. This was called *recitazione a braccia,* which was the old yard-measure before the meter came along—*acting by the yard.* The servants gathered and the peasants used to come in to see the play. There was no supper, one had dined, of course—there was nothing to complicate things. Sometimes the scheme was for a farce, sometimes more of an ambitious comedy, sometimes charades; at any rate it was the child of the old *commedia dell' arte*—Often the play had an ironic turn—a doctor's prescriptions for the various patients are all mixed up, so that everyone gets the wrong medicine, and everyone gets well—such irony as is a part of the Latin mind.

He has often thought, he says, of those days in the country, those families on the land, the summer evenings. The men in these houses for the most part had nothing to do but live. *Fare signore* is the phrase; *he does the gentleman,* more or less translates it: you live, you do nothing, you cultivate the graces sometimes, you bring up a family, you make love, or you become, after a fashion, a scholar. He has often reflected, too, he says, what a comment it is on the Italian character and the Italian policy, this improvisation. I will find, if I think it over, he says, that this trait is the blessing or the curse of Italy. You can see the Italian theatre. Today there is no Italian theatre—well, Pirandello, perhaps, as a dramatist, and certain other lesser dramatists—but as a whole theatre what have we? I know, do I not, he says, how the prompter works in Italian theatres, who has not heard the prompters? This is partly because conditions in Italy oblige you to produce so many plays; you have not enough time to learn the lines even if you wanted to. But fundamentally it derives from the Italian tradition of making up the words as you go along, keeping within the dramatist's scene as you improvise. Even Duse, though she might say the words of the text, often smothered certain words or accented others according to the inspiration of the moment, so that it not seldom amounted to a virtual improvisation. And one thing is certain, he says, finally: you will never understand Italian politics unless you know something of this improvisation.

In our politics and our diplomacy, he says, we Italians have a way of taking it easy, enjoying ourselves, remaining in agreeable oblivion, whatever it is—he doesn't know quite how to say it—and then, all of a sudden, improvising, evolving a policy, a move, an idea, at times some brilliant invention. Sometimes an improvisation remains as a success; sometimes it is excellent but not made use of, it is left to waste; sometimes it bridges the moment admirably. This is why Italian diplomacy is more like the English than it is like the French. The Englishman and the Italian rock along, as nature seems to do, and then quite suddenly, and by necessity perhaps, they may improvise. The line of their logic wavers and rests, and then, all at once, they must pull through. This is why the French and Italians will never understand each other. The Frenchman, if his mind, working logically, brings him to a precipice, will go on and fall off it. The Englishman or Italian, less set on the logic, and more on the human good sense and the necessity present, will stop and do something about it. The French process has its charms, somewhat academic perhaps, and in a world stratified and arranged would work wonders. In human life as it is, this logic often only goes round in one's skull like a squirrel in a cage.

Well, he says with a sigh, not too unhappy, he still feels, nevertheless, that, with all its defects, this improvisation is a good sign. It at least is an evidence of fecundity, it shows abundance.

That fact, I say now in my turn, coming back to the acting, and making a kind of stubborn, graceless lecture no doubt, is plainly to be seen in the *commedia dell' arte.* The *commedia,* so profoundly the child of this land of his, is the source and sound basis of the entire art of the theatre. To begin with, it includes all the basic elements, the words, the music, the character outline, the action, the dance—its actor's art rests fully on the dance, as all acting essentially must do, relating its tempo and design both in thought and in physical movement to dance principles. The right unreality and the heightening in the theatre art are best understood in the light of the *commedia dell' arte.* You will never understand Pirandello until you know this and can see how his ideas, characters and events, not so much real or new or important in themselves, are made to dance and whirl in a lively pattern of unreality, a *commedia dell' arte* in which the harlequins and *zanni* and *pulchinellos* are ideas, psychological motives, spirited theses. Ibsen and his genera-

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tion injected into the theatre art a moral depth of intention and a social insistence that were much needed. For the essential, leaping, living theatre, they were in a sense a kind of sterilization from which it still needs time to recover and go on its fecund highway, with all its masks, spirits and vitality.

My companion listens to me agreeably. I am not sure that he has analyzed this theatre art so laboriously; it was not in his generation to do so. But he has in his bones, almost, the sense of what I have been saying. He was born with a nose for the parochial and the dead in the theatre art; he scents from afar whatever is dead and stultifying, regardless of the high pretensions that it may assume, often honestly enough.

Yes, he repeats, going back to his people and his theme, he rather rejoices in this improvisation of theirs, the Italian in him doubtless. But it at least implies living, fecundity, he must believe, a kind of plenty and creative force, if you have faith in life as vitality pouring up, as seed, a source, springs, abundance.

STARK YOUNG.

Afterthoughts on the Circus

THE CIRCUS is a dying institution. By this I do not mean that the next two years, or even the next two decades, will mark its disappearance from winter quarters in Sarasota, from the spring jubilee in Madison Square Garden, from the big tent swiftly erected beside the railroad tracks in Birmingham, Pittsburgh, Columbus. The circus will continue; it may even grow in splendor, but the germs of decay are within it; some day the big tent will crash to the ground. For in growing so huge and glamorous and mechanically perfect, the circus has grown away from its audience. Small boys don't run off with it any more.

The circus today is the best example of the general tendency toward amalgamation. Barnum and Bailey, Ringling Brothers, Adam Forepaugh, and I think Buffalo Bill—all these spectacles are here brought together, retaining the best features of each. Beyond them are all the pigmy circuses which these dead giants once absorbed or forced out of business, and, still farther in the distance, all the forms of entertainment out of which the circus grew. Every act has its history, going back in some cases to the settlement of Texas, in others to the market place of medieval towns, in others to the religious processions of the prehistoric Greeks. The horse show, the traveling menagerie, the Wild West show, the country fair, yes, and the Roman arena, are here amalgamated under one canvas roof, together with the most sensational attractions currently devised in Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Australia—and at what danger to all these institutions! I can't recall the name of the tyrant who wished that all humanity had one head, so he could chop it off. I know, however, that the fates which control our civilization act as that tyrant wished to act. They combine and centralize whatever they wish to destroy at one blow.

The more concentrated is an institution, the more vulnerable it becomes; and this is true of everything from popular amusements to countries as a whole. Once a civilization is wholly centered in one city, the city and the civilization are in danger of falling together. But for a time before the sudden or slow catastrophe, they enjoy a period of splendor, and this is the present fortune of the circus. I doubt that it has ever been so dazzling. Of course it changes little from season to season; an act is added here, anotner taken away; but the whole spectacle is acquiring the speed and mechanical polish that follow a slow but not interminable period of development and often precede a period of decline. The circus is an art form surviving from another age, when hugeness and uniqueness were the ideals of mass entertainment, instead of the reduplication that prevails today. It is an art form that has reached perfection at a time when many people prefer to visit the local movie, or to stay home and listen to the radio. They don't know what they're missing. "It's a good circus this year," my neighbors say with the air of connoisseurs. I nod, thinking of Captain Beatty among his forty-odd lions and tigers, of Alfredo Codona making three turns in the air as he whirls from trapeze to trapeze, but thinking especially of the dance executed on a tight wire by Con Colleano, with the grace and slow precision of a matador. All these men are known to the audience, but the quality of their performance, its polish, accuracy and timing, improves with endless practice. "It's a good circus," I agree. Let us hope that it remains a good circus till the day when none of us survives to mourn its end.

M. C.

CORRESPONDENCE

In Defense of Life, Etc.

SIR: As one who has faith in the "new philosophy," it seems to me that many of Morris R. Cohen's points in "dispraise of life, experience and reality" are not inconsistent with pragmatism. The pragmatist affirms that life and experience are human ultimates; he does not affirm that life and experience are unmitigated blessings. Quite the contrary, he is consistently to be found urging change and reform, activities quite meaningless if it be conceived that he has "accepted" life and experience as good. Pragmatic values, like realist values, cannot be achieved without a technique of reflection. Here there can be no quarrel. But the source of values, to the analysis of which reflection must be turned, is experience and life; because only such values as are derived from experience and life are possible of actualization in experience and life. If the realist chooses as preferable an escape in terms of values which cannot be actualized, it is a choice which derives from temperament and taste. The realist has yet to prove that such ideal values are greater goods than realizable values.

Professor Cohen considers "defining the good, the true and the beautiful" the task of a rational philosophy. I venture that he would agree with the pragmatist that this is a "possible" task. Now if the good, the true and the beautiful can be defined by man, the implication is that the possibility of definition is given by life and experience. The possibility alone is given, not the standards. The standards cannot be merely "found" in life and experience without reflection and logic; but the assistance rendered by reflection and logic is instrumental, and the primary fact is that whatever they attain to, they achieve within the medium of life and experience. Standards are constantly developing out of and in the course of experience. More rigorous reflection and discrimination will result in better standards, certainly. This the pragmatist would be last to deny. But he does deny that standards come from some "other world" of reality apart from life and experience. Life and experience are characterized by a quality which makes discrimination between truth and falsehood, good and bad, beauty and ugliness, possible. The pragma-

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tist urges a course of conduct to make the most of this possibility. The realist disregards it. From the pragmatic standpoint, the ideal values which the realist prefers to create must involve constant frustration and disillusion in life.

ALEXANDER LESSER.

Pawnee, Oklahoma.

And Who Is Keats?

SIR: In the interest of American culture, will you please see to it the plans, interior and exterior, of all important buildings, be submitted to Mr. Lewis Mumford before erection begins. It is such a pity that all our modern architecture should be chaotic, stupid, non-integral, nuisancic, inane, respectable, dull, New Yorkish, egoistic, silly, sorry, mistaken, nastily tricky, indecent, unsatisfactory, pasted on, funny, riotous, wrong, grievous, bad, modernistic mish-mashy, restless, egregious, ecclesiastical, Chicago moviesque, meaninglessly voluptuous, weakly conceived, sorriest, stultifying, deplorable, gew-gawish, mistaken, lower, deader, feeble and finally frantic, when we have with us a person like Mr. Mumford, who knows the opposites of all these adjectives, and who, therefore, undoubtedly could erect a building to which not even he could apply one of them.

But, ah, there's that unfortunate "but," has a critic of Keats yet lived, or will one ever live, who could improve even the worst of his poems?

W. DAVENANT CAVENDISH.

Seattle, Wash.

[It is amusing to find Mr. Cavendish repeating the notion Mr. Raymond Hood introduced at the Frank Lloyd Wright meeting of Audac last February, when he suggested that the criticism of architecture had better be left to the architects themselves: by implication it offered no place for an honest man of letters. If only the architects would practise that function, I should be very glad to let them, and should retire happily from the field. But I am not at all won over to Mr. Cavendish's notion that the fact that I cannot design a building disables me from passing upon the results. I am not able to lay an egg, either, but I can tell by testing it whether it is good or bad.—LEWIS MUMFORD.]

English Rule in India

SIR: In The New Republic of December 10, Mr. Robert Morss Lovett, reviewing a batch of books on India, accepts as fact a story told in Colonel Osburn's "Must England Lose India?" The story is one of two which, Colonel Osburn tells us, two Englishmen who "had served in India after the War" told him as actual exploits of their own. The first is the oldest of Indian chestnuts, older than even the "rupee or virgin" yarn which was palmed off on Miss Mayo by an American (I am glad it was not an Englishman!) "whose word had never been questioned." I heard it often, long before the War; and it was a genuine antique then.

The second story, which has shocked other Americans as well as your reviewer, is the invention of a nasty mind imagining what a terrible fellow its owner could be if he tried. I ask Mr. Lovett, in fairness, to ask the first medical man or surgeon he meets, if the feat the two Englishmen told as their own is not physically impossible to anything less than a regular mob. It never happened, and neither your reviewer nor Colonel Osburn can bring forward the slightest evidence that it did.

Now let your reviewer start back with these two whacking lies as evidence of Colonel Osburn's quite outstanding gullibility, and read the book again.

EDWARD THOMPSON.

Oxford, England.

[In commenting on Mr. Thompson's statement in his book "Reconstructing India": "If an Englishman is rude to an Indian, it is noted, repeated and like enough gets into print. If an Indian is rude to an Englishman, it is probably passed over, often with that generous refusal to take offense which (after all) is one of the Englishman's natural merits," I cited as an example of the Englishman's type of rudeness Colonel Osburn's story of the mutilation of an Indian for paying attention to an English girl. In his letter Mr. Thompson misquotes Colonel Osburn. The story was told him by *one of two Englishmen,* who described the reprisal as being carried out *by himself and his friends.* Colonel Osburn admits that the incident may have been untrue or exaggerated, but insists that the significant thing is that such things can be told by Englishmen with the expectation of approval by other Englishmen. Mr. Thompson says, "It never happened," and challenges me to "bring forward the slightest evidence that it did." I can only fall back on antecedent probability. The other case which I cited as an example of the English type of rudeness was that of British soldiers who raped a beggar woman, and got into print because of the investigation by Lord Curzon, then Viceroy. Will Mr. Thompson say of this incident: "It never happened?"—R. M. L.]

Gross Margins and Percentages

SIR: All students of American retailing will be interested in Mr. Flynn's new series of articles on "Chain Stores: Menace or Promise?" but I think it might fairly be said that he did not increase the effectiveness of his presentation by insisting that the retailer's reason for basing the percentage of his gross margin on the selling price rather than the cost price was "because it sounds less shocking."

If merchandise which is sold at $2.50 is bought at $1.50, the retailers who have been trained in the best methods of avoiding misinterpretation of their figures speak of having a 40-percent mark-up, or, in some cases, it is called a 40-percent discount. Mr. Flynn believes that speaking of this as a 66-percent profit makes the charge of inefficiency stronger against the retailer. If Mr. Flynn had been in retailing or had tried to train retailers to better methods, he would realize how many had gotten into confusion with their affairs by just the method he recommends. For example, if a man was buying a retail store doing $50,000 worth of business and paying $5,000 rent, he would understand that the business was paying a 10-percent rental, and, if the average gross margin of that business was 40 percent of $50,000, he would know that 25 percent of his gross margin was going to rent. If he adopted Mr. Flynn's recommendation, he would picture himself as having a 66-percent gross margin and only a 10-percent rent, and would therefore have 46 percent left for other expenses. Carrying on this idea for a few months, he would find himself owing much more money than he had received. It has taken a long time to get retailers to keep their figures in a systematic way, and Mr. Flynn adds nothing to his argument by trying to confuse them on that particular point. To use the accepted and correct system of percentage would not weaken his arguments at all.

FREDERIC MELCHER.

New York City.

The Economy of High Wages

SIR: Why does not George Soule in his article on economic planning, in The New Republic of March 11, stop with his economic-wage or his "economy of high wages" point, instead of making it so hard? His article starts off as though he were going to get right down to economic brass tacks and then he switches to a lot of other points which would largely take care of themselves if profits were being better distributed by means of the principle of the economic wage.

Our present system . . . is remarkably effective if we will just see the remaining need of a reasonable flow of the earnings to the operatives, who are also the market. The technical possibilities for volume business and earnings, and for raised standards of living under our present man-hour production, are staggering if we just get straightened out on this cardinal point. Soule's average of a $5,000-a-year income would just be a good start, both as to possibilities and as to any danger of surfeit.

The trouble with the capitalist system has not been in its competitive features or its private ownership, but in the colossal mistake of classing the services of people as a commodity to be exploited and bargained for under the law of supply and demand. On the contrary, the workers are the chief market and thus the

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most vital segment in the circle of production and consumption. An operative cannot contribute a twenty-cent share to the value of a product and then buy back his share if he is paid only ten cents. But if he is given the earned twenty cents, the temporary selling price of the product is affected just slightly, and an undreamt of market for goods is born, with producing costs later dropping under the high-pressure mass production that would be necessary. The flow of earnings to interest, rent and labor (including management) must be reasonable in proportion to the value contributed by the three elements, and this would mean a vast increase in the amount flowing to the third element.

The road to the adoption of this vital principle is not plain, just as the road to a completely changed system like social ownership would not be plain, but we need to concern ourselves less about "economic planning" and more about planning to speed this basic economic principle. Production would continue to organize itself, and investment would continue to guide itself, all under the effective law of supply and demand. With the mounting market for goods unemployment would disappear, and America's improved capitalist system would leave the Russian system at the post. . . .

The great puzzle is why our political progressives and progressive publications like The New Republic so largely misplace emphasis. Herbert Hoover, though counted by some progressives as a hopeless stand-patter, has been pointing the way for years and in my opinion sees the point of the economic wage better than do these critics. If the progressive leaders would join hands with Hoover the progressive in putting the emphasis where it belongs, would think the subject through and come out with a constructive program, they would function better as progressives. . . .

Pittsburgh, Pa.

G. W. WAKEFIELD.

[After nearly ten years of preaching "the economy of high wages," we have come nowhere near achieving it. The necessity for economic planning arises mainly from the necessity of organizing industry so that it can and will carry this policy into effect. It cannot do so under a regime of competition and planlessness.—THE EDITORS.]

National Planning

SIR: In relation to George Soule's articles on economic planning, I would like to make the following queries:

1. Who is to do the national planning? The suggestion to plan in the manner proposed by Mr. Soule should first go to those in a position to plan, should it not—that is to the employers who dominate the economic life of the country? Should "commissions" be commissions of capitalists? Or does Mr. Soule propose to have the planning turned over to politicians ostensibly responsible to the electors but really dominated by the ruling interests? Or to leaders of labor organizations in a state of decadence and admittedly one of the surest buffers between the unorganized labor masses and their economic masters? Or is the planning to be done by outsiders—unattached idealists like Mr. Soule?

2. As a wage objective of national planning Mr. Soule suggests a minimum income of $5,000 a year for the people of the United States. In order to realize this it may be necessary, he thinks, to double the annual production of present-day industry and agriculture. Does this mean that Henry Ford, for example, who does not at present guarantee to his employees a minimum equal to half the above sum, must increase his production of Fords to double or more their present annual output with the same personnel or, in lieu of that, raise prices in anticipation of a market from these higher-paid workers? In either event, is there no limit to the number of Fords and vehicles of a similar character that shall be allowed to clutter up the highways of the United States? Even in the rural districts congestion is becoming almost intolerable in the summer months. Would this fact have some bearing upon the problem of guaranteeing Ford workers, among others, a yearly minimum of $5,000 a year under national planning?

Again: How about Sam Jones, owner of a thirty-acre Ohio farm hiring one hand at $50 per month for eight months in the year, and himself getting a net income not much greater than that of his hand? How will national planning, including doubling the agricultural output as suggested by Soule, guarantee Sam Jones and his hired man their $5,000 apiece?

3. In view of the admitted difficulties of satisfying the demands for profits and at the same time guaranteeing the yearly minimum for everybody, wouldn't it be rather risky for capitalists peaceably to allow the organization of labor on the scale suggested by Mr. Soule? Wouldn't they also justly fear the possible invasion of these organized bodies by radicals and other malcontents to interfere with their planning? Or would the $5,000 "carrot" in front of the working mule's nose render him immune from radicalism or discontent?

4. Isn't the anarchic "planning" now prevalent in capitalist America—outlined in Mr. Soule's first article of the series—a logical accompaniment of the private ownership and control of the social means of life? What national planning, under this system, can prevent the corporation store and the corporation farm from wiping out the middle class? With the constant technical advance of industry and agriculture, what planning can prevent the accumulation of a redundant supply of workers who could only then receive the annual income as charity? Is it to be, then, "bread and the circus" to the tune of $5,000 a year for the industrial-reserve army?

5. If the American people are determined to keep on trying to prop up this unstable and socially vicious economic system, why should liberals or radicals help them do the planning to that end? Why not leave that job to the present "planners," who are legion--to the congressional commissions, the "round tables," the "foundations," the "committees of 8—or 48," and the rest of the saviors of capitalist society, including the practical and indispensable dispensers of soup and old rags, such as the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Volunteers of America? Might not liberals and radicals be better employed lining up the American democracy to put an end forever to this miserable mess? A lot of us are convinced that that wouldn't take nearly so long as it would take Mr. Soule and his followers (if they pursue their course) to discover that there is no "brain" capable of solving the cross-word puzzle of "national planning" under capitalism. Is it not reasonable that economic control must pass to the people of the nation before national planning can have any practicable method tending toward the goal of universal wellbeing?

B. H. WILLIAMS.

Milan, Ohio.

[Mr. Williams' general point of view is tenable; my article admitted that it may turn out to be valid. The argument for favoring planning before a social revolution is, in the main, twofold: (1) that we shall not really know whether planning is possible under capitalism unless it is tried, and (2) that if it is tried and fails, there will be more chance for those who agree with Mr. Williams to convert enough people so that the Socialist alternative may be tried. At present, it appears to be even more difficult promptly to abolish capitalism in the United States than to change it radically by introducing planning with social objectives. The answers to the specific questions are:

1. The planning is to be done by experts and by representatives of management, of labor and of government.

2. While there may be a natural limit to the wants for certain specific commodities like wheat or even automobiles, there would certainly be a market for a greatly enlarged production in general if incomes of consumers could be raised sufficiently. The way to begin is not to enlarge production, but to organize marginal industries and plants in such a way that higher wages can be paid.

3. The risk to capitalists of allowing the spread of labor organizations would be inversely proportional to the ability which capitalist industry might develop to meet the justified demands of these organizations. One purpose of planning is to enable these demands to be met.

4. Economic anarchy is a logical accompaniment of an unplanned society. Planning, if it is successful, will bring a radical transformation to capitalism as we know it. How far it must abolish private ownership and control of the means of production remains to be seen.—GEORGE SOULE.]

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Reading Time 4 Minutes Plus

An Hour of Politics, by Harold J. Laski. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 160 pages. $1.

FOR A VOLUME entitled "An Hour of Politics," a review, even in a Journal of Opinion, might properly borrow a device made familiar by a popular weekly of wide circulation and bear the caption, "Reading Time 4 Minutes and 13 Seconds." Such exactness invites skepticism. "Reading time for whom?" I ask myself when, on rare occasions, I happen to see such an announcement.

Well, you may be able to read Mr. Laski's little book (27,000 words) in an hour and you may be able to read this review (1,900 words) in 4 minutes and 13 seconds (some readers of The New Republic will read them both more rapidly), but you really ought to think for a much longer time about the things he says and I say—or rather the things he says and my comments on them. The reference to the popular weekly is not inappropriate, for Liberty looms large in Mr. Laski's discussion. To be sure, the word is not listed in the index and is rarely mentioned in the text. Nevertheless, the reader is always aware that the ideal, elsewhere defined by Mr. Laski as "the eager maintenance of that atmosphere in which men have the opportunity to be their best selves," orients a challenging discussion of political theory and political institutions.

Those familiar with Mr. Laski's previous writings—his three volumes of essays on various aspects of sovereignty and his somewhat more recent unabridged "Grammar of Politics"—will during their hour run across little that seems new. The four chapters deal with the nature of the state, the place of the state in society, the institutions which the state needs to accomplish its purposes, and the problem of international government. All of these matters are dealt with at length in the "Grammar," but it is worth while having them repeated here for a larger audience. In the repetition Mr. Laski naturally has an opportunity to improve upon his previous statement of his theories. Naturally also, covering a broad area in summary fashion, he can hardly avoid occasional dogmatism. This is most frequently evident in the section on institutions. "My dear fellow," as Whistler said to someone, "I am not arguing with you, I am telling you." Mr. Laski "tells" his reader about institutions. His prescriptions are for all bodies politic.

Not many of my seconds need be consumed in urging that the soil in which institutions are planted, the political climate in which they burgeon, and the men who do the cultivating and harvesting, are not without importance. Frequently, indeed, they are more important than the kind of seed which is planted. It is true that a "good" constitution may lessen inefficiency and that a "bad" constitution may transform excellence into mediocrity; but it is also true, as Bagehot said sixty years ago, that the men of Massachusetts, for example, could at that time have worked *any* constitution. Thus, it is a pity that the portion of the hour devoted to institutions can consider only the seed and not the soil or climate.

Mr. Laski says, for example, that a constitution should be more flexible than that of the United States because this instrument of government has a "rigidity" which is "notorious." He prefers legislative amendment, but by a special majority. As a matter of fact, however, congressional reluctance to propose amendments by a two-thirds vote has been more responsible for the notorious rigidity than has the veto of state legislatures. Twenty-four amendments have been proposed. Only five failed of ratification and only the last—dealing with child labor—was of high importance.

More than this. It can be argued that during the last century the rigid American Constitution has undergone more modifications than has the British or the French, both of which are at the mercy of normal legislative majorities. Nor can the issue of flexibility be polished off satisfactorily without some consideration of the great changes which come from custom and from judicial interpretation. Similarly, the lumping together of the French and German group systems as examples of an evil which must be avoided in Great Britain by a refusal to try proportional representation snatches a conclusion without examining some doubtful premises. I say this, not because of any fondness for P. R., but because the group phenomena are highly complex. Again, few would deny that a cabinet responsible to the legislature is in theory far more desirable than an executive on the American model. But even fewer would deny that the theory should be discussed in terms of the special problems raised by a federal system as complicated as that of the United States.

Doubtless this and other caveats would not be necessary if the whole hour had been devoted to institutions. Caveats are not necessary in the same way in respect to Mr. Laski's reëxposition of his political theories. He then has a chance to argue with his reader. In two chapters he sharpens a trifle his concept of sovereignty. He distinguishes more clearly than before, that is to say, between sovereignty as a legal idea and sovereignty in fact.

Mr. Laski's frequent and hearty jousting against sovereignty has been of great service in political theory. One phase of this service has been the elaborate demonstration of the fact that states have not actually been the possessors of supreme wills which they could at all times enforce. Mr. Laski's historical studies brought to this demonstration a wealth of illustrative evidence. Controversy began, however, when far-reaching conclusions were drawn. Did the state's failure to coerce a trade union, a church or a group of conscientious objectors mean that sovereignty was shared with those groups and associations? Must a monistic theory become pluralistic?

To an extent the fight against sovereignty was carried on by putting up a straw man and then knocking him down. But while it lasted the bout was thrilling. The annihilation was accomplished with eloquence and learning which were equally remarkable. Pluralism, girding on the championship belt, issued a defy to all contenders past and future for the sovereignty-theory title. Hence challengers were wise enough to train carefully before they entered the ring. They studied in their training camps the weakness of the pluralist defense. As a result, recent non-pluralist discussions of sovereignty—for example, those by MacIver, McIlwain and John Dickinson—have offered no more straw men.

As a result, also, Mr. Laski has begun to separate legal considerations from political and factual considerations—but not sufficiently. At least this will be the verdict of some of his critics. They will object that an inadequate appreciation of the importance of sovereignty as a legal concept permits a too extreme statement of the right of resistance. Thus: "Where a State is in conflict, therefore, with the Church or a trade union or a body like the Communist party it has no *a priori* claim to allegiance. Its claim depends upon the view taken of the conflict by those who are related to it." Or, again: "We cannot, for instance, say that a franchise law is just which confines the right to vote exclusively to men if women denounce it as unjust. We cannot argue that the British Trade Union

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Act of 1927 is just if trade unionists widely denounce it as class legislation." Would it be unfair to take other examples and attempt a *reductio ad absurdum?*

I pass this point and simply suggest that such conclusions seem to do violence to Mr. Laski's previously expressed belief that the "only claim which the state can make to obedience is built upon the chaos which results from a challenge to its authority." We cannot pause to query the "only," but the claim is, as Mr. Laski grants, a powerful one, and "resistance ought always, from the cost it involves, to be a weapon of last instance."

It is of course true, as Mr. Laski says, that "the right of resistance is the reserve power in society by which men whose demands are denied may legitimately seek to alter the balance of forces in the state." That is nobly put, but one must not forget the chaos which challenge brings. Mr. Laski remembers it in one place and ignores it in another place. One reason is, as I have suggested, his persistent refusal to recognize that juridical sovereignty is a good deal more than a peg upon upon which the analytical jurists hang their thinking. It is a concept of a legal order which attempts to settle disputes impartially and to substitute certainty and justice for chance and force. It provides a machinery of compromise which may not satisfy the losers, but which persuades them to consent to lose. Failure of justice may be frequent, but at least the state should be entitled to a presumption that its decision, which will avoid chaos, should prevail against objections of an individual or even a group. Mr. Laski reverses this presumption.

This failure clearly to distinguish the legal and the non-legal implications of sovereignty appears in the reverse form when international relations are discussed. As Mr. Laski truly says, every attempt to translate international interdependence "into institutional terms is met by the ghost of the sovereign state still seeking feverishly to retain in its hands the ruins of its empire." Unless this ghost is laid the outlook is dark. "It is obvious that the sovereignty of the state means anarchy." In other words, states should obey the legal imperatives issued by a body like the League Council, which, Mr. Laski suggests, is hampered by the rule of unanimity. But how can such reasoning be reconciled with the reasoning in respect to legal imperatives internally viewed? If a liberum veto may be demanded by trade unions or churches, why may it not be similarly demanded by a state unwilling to accept a decision of the community of nations? To raise these questions, I think, makes no unreasonable demand for logic.

Mr. Laski sets down an impressive list of limitations which, internationally, have been imposed on states, and then is pessimistic about the future. On the evidence which he cites he might well be optimistic. Take disarmament, for example. It is true that the promises of the Covenant have not yet been implemented. During the last dozen years, however, we have seen statesmen limber up for action on disarmament and repeat the promises of the Covenant. A principle has been accepted, and naval armaments have been in fact limited. Perhaps the Geneva Conference will check the rate of increase on land and in the air. Before the War any prophecy that statesmen would make the professions which they now do and that states would reach the agreements that they actually have reached would have seemed wildly fantastic. Delays and hesitancy have been shocking, but the sovereign state, as able an architect of ruin as the world has known, is less sovereign than it was. Mr. Laski should not demand that churches and trade unions be less generous.

LINDSAY ROGERS.

Tadjikistan

The Road to the Gray Pamir, by Anna Louise Strong. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 289 pages, illustrated. $3.

THE KIRGHIZ nation pasturing sheep in the valleys of the Alai and Trans-Alai mountains, in what is now known officially as the Tadjikistan Republic, but more familiarly as Russian Turkestan, lost a third of its population in the Great War and its aftercourse. The loss was partly in starvation, partly in bandit depredations; but chiefly in a vain rebellion against the senseless requisitions of the Tsarist army officials, who, in taking the sheep and horses of the Kirghiz, took their whole living from them. This rebellion, suppressed with the ferocity characteristic of the Tsar's pacifiers, explains why the largest proportionate casualties of the War were borne by a nomad people in the middle of Asia who did not even know the names of the combatant nations.

But the War had a stranger and far more important consequence to the Kirghiz. The government that has succeeded the Tsar's is a proselytizing government, projecting an influence as ardent and virile as the faith that hundreds of years ago had brought Islam to them. Who can tell what this new influence will effect? The Soviets themselves would like to know. Early in her journey, Miss Strong met a university expedition which was gathering the data for a new social, economic and political structure, and was conducting its investigations under three significant heads—nomadic, partly agricultural, agricultural. A people that has never before practised agriculture is slowly becoming a nation of farmers. Socially the changes are even more drastic; polygamy and the purchase of brides are being stamped out. Violations of the laws against them produce most of the cases brought to the courts. If less important, the political changes are more picturesque. It is extraordinary to read of the Soviet of the High Pastures, a government whose administration buildings are the nomad *yurts* and whose sittings are in the vale of the Alai—which, in the summer, becomes a settled land, where enormous flocks are pastured, and a government can function for a season.

If the subject chosen by Miss Strong had been this extraordinary and rapid transformation of nomad, illiterate and so-called backward tribesmen into a settled, literate and culturally contemporary people, she would have given us a very valuable book. No doubt the reports of the university expedition she ran into will some day be very useful; but it can scarcely be hoped that they will have the power and interest of an account by so keen, objective and talented an observer as Miss Strong has proved herself to be. Moreover, these reports are hardly likely to show the forces behind the process, being themselves part of it. The Soviet government grants autonomy to homogeneous peoples; and to those which have neither written language nor alphabet, it assigns philologists to invent them. All this gives the deceptive appearance of tolerating different nationalities, but the fact is that no such toleration is given. Language was the fetish of the nineteenth-century nationalisms. The Soviets, on the other hand, use it as their best tool to sovietize distant peoples, for by means of it they can attack from within the essential local traditions and swiftly denationalize the race. In this I do not believe there has been any machiavellian calculation. It seems to me that a number of idealisms, working simultaneously, are producing results that none of them anticipated.

Miss Strong, unfortunately, has chosen to write about

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something else. She has chosen to write about a difficult trip to the Pamir, which is, once more to bring up that banality of glamor, "the roof of the world." The point seems to be that this roof is about as monotonous and unprepossessing as the shingle roof of a cottage. We are told something about an intractable horse, dangerous passes, and so on, but all this is quickly forgotten. What remains in the mind is the by-the-way account of the Kirghiz and how they are becoming a settled Soviet nation. There is too little of that—just enough to save the book.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Miss Millay's Sonnets

Fatal Interview, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. New York: Harper and Brothers. 52 pages. $2.

MORE THAN any other living American poet, with the exception possibly of T. S. Eliot, Miss Millay has puzzled her critics. Contrary to the received opinion, her poetry is understood even less than Eliot's, in spite of its greater simplicity, its more conventional meters and its closer fulfilment of the popular notion of what the language of poetry should be. Of contemporary poets whose excellence is beyond much dispute, she is the most difficult to appraise. She is the most written about, but her critics are partisans: they like her too well or not enough. There is something like worship here, patronage or worse there; both views are unjust; and what is worse, they are misleading. Less interested readers of her verse are tired of violent opinion; the more skeptical, perhaps, are put off by her popularity in an age of famously indifferent taste.

This, too, is misleading. Apart from her merit as a poet, Miss Millay is, not at all to her discredit, the spokesman of a generation. It does not behoove us to enquire how she came to express the feelings of the literary generation that seized the popular imagination from about 1917 to 1925. It is a fact that she did, and in such a way as to remain as its most typical poet. Her talent, with its diverting mixture of solemnity and levity, won the enthusiasm of a time bewildered intellectually and moving unsteadily towards an emotional attitude of its own. It was the age of The Seven Arts, of the old Masses, of the Provincetown Theatre, of the figure and disciples of Randolph Bourne. It has been called the age of experiment and liberation; there is still experiment, but no one is liberated; and that age is now dead.

Miss Millay helped to form that generation, and was formed by it. But she has survived her own time. Her statement about those times, in "A Few Figs from Thistles" and "Second April," was not, taken philosophically, very profound; morally, it has been said, it did perceptible damage to our young American womanhood, whose virgin impatience competed noisily with the Armistice and the industrial boom. There were suicides after "Werther" and seductions after "Don Juan." Neither Byron nor Miss Millay is of the first order of poets. They are distinguished examples of the second order, without which literature could not bear the weight of Dante and Shakespeare, and without which poetry would dry up of insensibility.

Being this kind of poet, Miss Millay was not prepared to give to her generation a philosophy in comprehensive terms; her poetry does not define the break with the nineteenth century. This task was left to the school of Eliot, and it was predictable that this school should be—except by young men who had the experience to share Eliot's problem—ignored and misunderstood. Eliot penetrated to the fundamental structure of the nineteenth-century mind and showed its breakdown. Miss Millay assumed no such profound alteration of the intelligence because, I suppose, not being an intellect but a sensibility, she was not aware of it. She foreshadowed an age without bringing it to terms. Taking the vocabulary of nineteenth-century poetry as pure as you will find it in Christina Rossetti, and drawing upon the stock of conventional symbolism accumulated from Drayton to Patmore, she has created, out of shopworn materials, a distinguished personal idiom: she has been able to use the language of the preceding generation to convey an emotion peculiar to her own.

The generation of decadence—Moody, Woodberry and Louise Imogene Guiney—had more than Miss Millay has; but she has all that they had which was not dead. By making their language personal she has brought it back to life. This is her distinction. It is also her limitation. As a limitation it is not peculiar to her, her age or any age, but common to all; it is the quality that defines Collins and Gray, and, in the next century, poets like the Rossettis and Tennyson. Poets of this second order lack the power of creation in the proper sense in which something like a complete world is achieved, either in the vast, systematic vision of Milton, or in the allusive power of Webster and Shakespeare where, backed only by a piece of common action, an entire world is set up in a line or even in a single phrase. In these poets the imaginative focus is less on the personal emotion than on its substructure, an order of intellectual life, and thus their very symbolism acquires not only a heightened significance but an independent existence of its own. Not so with Miss Millay; we feel that she never penetrates to the depth of her symbols, but uses them chiefly as a frame of reference, an adornment to the tale. It has been frequently and quite justly remarked that Miss Millay uses her classical symbols perhaps better than any other living poet; we should add, I believe, that she uses them conventionally better. She takes them literally, subtracting from them always only what serves her metaphor; whereas even a modern like Yeats is capable, in his sonnet "Leda," of that violent addition to the content of the symbol as he finds it which is the mark of great poetry.

Miss Millay's success with stock symbolism is precariously won. I have said that she is not an intellect but a sensibility: if she were capable of a profound analysis of her imagery she might not use it: such an analysis might disaffect her with the style that she so easily assumed, without necessarily leading her, as Yeats was led in mid-career, to create a new style of her own. The beautiful final sonnet of the sequence is a perfect specimen of her talent, and it is probably the finest poem she has written:

> Oh, sleep forever in the Latmian cave,
> Mortal Endymion, darling of the moon!
> Her silver garments by the senseless wave
> Shouldered and dropped and on the shingle strewn,
> Her fluttering hand against her forehead pressed,
> Her scattered looks that trouble all the sky,
> Her rapid footsteps running down the west—
> Of all her altered state, oblivious lie!
> Whom earthen you, by deathless lips adored,
> Wild-eyed and stammering to the grasses thrust,
> And deep into her crystal body poured
> The hot and sorrowful sweetness of the dust:
> Whereof she wanders mad, being all unfit
> For mortal love, that might not die of it.

We have only to compare this, magnificent as it is, with

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Mr. Yeats's "Leda" to see the difference between the two kinds of symbol that I have described. The difference is first of all one of concentration and intensity; and finally a difference between an accurate picture of an emotion and an act of the imagination:

> A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
> Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
> By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
> He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.
>
> How can those terrified vague fingers push
> The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
> And how can body, laid in that white rush
> But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?
> A shudder in the loins engenders there
> The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
> And Agamemnon dead.
> Being so caught up,
> So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
> Did she put on his knowledge with his power
> Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

In an age which, in Mr. Pound's phrase, has "demanded an image"; an age which has searched for a new construction of the mind, and has, in effect, asked every poet for a chart of salvation, it has been forgotten that one of the most valuable kinds of poetry may be deficient in imagination, and yet be valuable for the manner in which it meets its own defect. Miss Millay not only has given the personality of her age, but has preserved it in the purest traditional style. There are those who will have no minor poets; these Miss Millay does not move. The others, her not too enthusiastic but perhaps misguided partisans, have seen too much of their own personalities in her verse to care whether it is great poetry or not; so they call it great.

It is doubtful if all of Miss Millay's previous work put together is worth the thin volume of these fifty-two sonnets. At no previous time has she given us so sustained a performance. Half of the sonnets, perhaps all but about fifteen, lack distinction of emotional quality. None is deficient in an almost final technique. From first to last every sonnet has its special rhythm and sharply defined imagery; they move like a smooth machine, but not machine-like, under the hand of a masterly technician. The best sonnets would adorn any of the great English sequences. There is some interesting analysis to be made of Miss Millay's skillful use of the Shakespearean form, whose difficult final couplet she has mastered, and perhaps is alone in having mastered since Shakespeare.

The serious, austere tone of her later work must not deceive us: she is the poet of ten years ago. She has been from the beginning the one poet of our time who has successfully stood athwart two ages; she has put the personality of her age into the intellect and style of the preceding one, without altering either. Of her it may be said, as of the late Elinor Wylie, that properly speaking she has no style, but has subtly transformed to her use the indefinable average of poetic English. We have seen the limitations of this order of talent. When the personal impulse lags in a mind that cannot create a symbol and invent a style, we get the pastiche of "The Buck in the Snow": the defects of such a talent are defects of taste, while the defects of Blake are blunders. Let us say no more of it. Miss Millay is one of our most distinguished poets, and one that we should do well to misunderstand as little as possible.

ALLEN TATE.

Happy Days

The Gospel According to St. Luke's, by Philip Stevenson. New York: Longmans Green and Company. $2.

MR. STEVENSON'S book, in spite of all the publisher says on the jacket, is neither turbulent, profound, intense, nor particularly dangerous. It is an unpretentious novel of three hundred pages, dealing with a group of young preparatory-school gentlemen—their frustrations, their monotonous ecstasies and the quite uninteresting life they managed to live at St. Luke's (for which we are privileged to read "Pomfret") in the days before the War. The author does not concern himself with the biography of one pupil: by a peculiar process of slicing and shuffling, he records the problems of all the pupils, all the faculty members, even the faculty wives. The book opens with a passage on sensitive Ethelbert. Ethelbert is pale, nervous, ill; he stutters; the new pupils ridicule him; he trembles with petty fears. More people are brought into the narrative; faces emerge and disappear. There are athletics, dramatics, chapel, more athletics, more dramatics and the gradual maturity of the whole class. There are the trivial tragedies of cribbing, lost football games, broken friendships. Ethelbert, who came to the school as a sensitive misfit, leaves it as an insensitive business man. Tony, who entered St. Luke's as a presentable classmate and football player, leaves it as a hypersensitive and definitely unpresentable poet. There is no moral. There is no prophecy. In the end they all go off to Harvard, and eventually, one feels, they will all go off to war and get killed.

The author attempts to concern himself with many problems and many attitudes; to treat the struggle of a Jew, the struggle of a poet, the struggle of a football captain, the repressions of a professor's wife, and to describe them all with the same detachment. But by seeing so many things, he fails to see the significance of any one. By trying to characterize the group as an entity rather than through the prejudice of any one person, he has robbed the book of all possible violence. He has made it a document—and one which chiefly goes to prove the remarkable innocence of prep-school life before the War as compared with life in similar schools today.

The boys at St. Luke's go to dances, drive about in traps, attend the movies and see "The Perils of Pauline." They dance to phonographs, play "Kentucky Babe" on their banjos, look with distrust at women who know the alchemy of rouge pots, and steal their first kiss on a Coney Island roller coaster. They are physically fit, emotionally simple, and their vices are incidental. When they drink (and they don't drink till they get into college) it is with adolescent pride and boastfulness and thirst for the "intense" and "dangerous" experiences of life. When they wander toward the Bowery on one of their New York holidays, they avoid the saloons, go to one night club and get very drunk on two double snifters. And when Tony finally discovers the consummations of sex, during his second year at college, the author erupts into a Victorian rhapsody:

> The rocket burst, exploded at the apex of space. For an instant he knew everything. Blue stars and green, lemon and crimson, stars of knowledge streamed from him and shot away into the farthest corners of darkness. He described a slow arc, turned over slowly and fell consumed; down, down, deeply; plunged; down to the center of the earth; to sleep, to peace. And lay still.

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All this, of course, is incidental, but any book that offers itself as a novel and not as a treatise on popular science ought to avoid describing sexual functions in terms of astronomy.

JON CHEEVER.

Book Notes

BIOGRAPHY

ABRAHAM COWLEY, The Muse's Hannibal, by Arthur H. Nethercot. *New York: Oxford University Press. 366 pages. $4.75.*

The purpose of this biography of Abraham Cowley—to give "a complete account of the life and works of a man whose position as a major English poet was considered by his contemporaries to be as secure as Shakespeare's own"—is well fulfilled. Full attention is given to all of Cowley's activities as a poet, playwright, royalist and spy, physician, educational theorist, and to the nobles and literary men who lived excited and sometimes dangerous lives under the first Charles, Cromwell and the Restoration. The account is scholarly and thorough, even critical, but never dull.

ST. LOE STRACHEY: His Life and His Paper, by Amy Strachey. *New York: Brewer and Warren. 387 pages. $5.*

The widow of the late editor of The Spectator writes a companion volume to his autobiography, "The Adventure of Living"; starting from the day when they first met, she narrates his career as she saw it. Most of the English and American political celebrities of the last quarter-century came in contact with Strachey, and are described with a kindly humor. Both style and subject matter recall the old-fashioned conservative England in its more tolerant and civilized aspects.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE GOOD LIFE, by Charles Gore. *New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 346 pages. $3.*

In these Gifford Lectures, delivered at the University of St. Andrews in 1929-30, Bishop Gore of the English Church investigates the foundations of moral values, the efficacy of prayer, and Christian and other religious and philosophical contributions to human experiments toward the Good Life. Aristotle is omitted because, according to an explanatory note, his thought was little more than a "critical republication" of Plato; Aquinas is named on two pages, mentioned in one footnote and suggested in another; the religions of India, save Buddhism, are left out from the historical survey, for in them "no consistent theory of moral obligation or of the good life is found." Idealistic monism is finally preferred, with its attendant dilution of values and problems and the ultimate reasonableness of the good life found in "the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the very word of God Incarnate."

THE MEANING OF THE GLORIOUS KORAN, an Explanatory Translation by Marmaduke Pickthall. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 693 pages. $7.50.*

Mr. Pickthall has written several good books dealing with Mohammedan life, which has absorbed him sufficiently to result in his conversion. His translation of the Moslem scriptures was undertaken as a convert's act of devotion, its object being not merely to satisfy the curiosity of the West, but to provide "an authorized" version for English Moslems and, so the reader assumes, a text that might be used, with its apparatus of "explanations," for proselytizing purposes. The translation does not read better than older translations such as Palmer's, but it is obvious that Mr. Pickthall has been more scrupulously precise. With all the will in the world to make an objective judgment, it is hard to hail Mohammed or his Inspirer as a great thinker or a great writer. The message is confused, verbose, rather colorless and overfull of theological jargon and charm words. Yet several hundred million people revere it not only as demonstrated truth but as the single, perfect piece of literature. It makes one speculate on the impression conveyed by the Bible on an educated Moslem.

CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT OF INDIA, by A. C. Underwood. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 235 pages. $2.50.*

This is one of the volumes in "The Library of Contemporary Thought," which, under the general editorship of Dr. W. Tudor Jones, is making a survey of intellectual movements all over the world. Italy, France, Great Britain, Japan and China, Germany, have already had their volumes. Germany is to have a second volume now in preparation, and there will be a volume on America and one for the Scandinavian countries. Dr. Underwood's task seems to have been too delicate both for his tastes and capacities. There is little abstract thinking being done in India today; its best minds are absorbed by the hope of achieving political independence, and by the social problems of caste, the emancipation of women, the conciliation of Hinduism and Islam, education, and so on. Mr. Underwood, obviously depressed by the political situation, tries hard not to misunderstand native opinion and seems to have succeeded only in blunting his interpretation of it. The book does, however, present valuable data.

FICTION

GAY AGONY, by H. A. Manhood. *New York: The Viking Press. $2.50.*

The story, that of a timid young man who finds himself entangled with the primitive desires of peasant folk in the west of England, is subordinate to its manner of handling—and the latter is a beautiful example of how bad writing may masquerade as cream. The author twists and wrenches words about, forcing metaphors and adjectives into wrong places; the net result is not originality, but resentment on the part of the reader.

Contributors

H. J. FREYN, whose report on the Five Year Plan appears in the present issue, is identified in an editorial note preceding his article.

PHELPS PUTNAM, the author of "Trinc," and of a new volume of verse which is to be published early this fall by Scribner's, has just been appointed a Deputy Sheriff in New Mexico. Mr. Putnam was an active participant in the recent progressive conference.

CATHERINE K. BAUER, formerly in charge of the advertising department at Harcourt, Brace, recently returned from Europe, where she studied the modern architecture of Holland, Germany and Sweden in preparation for the book she is now writing.

YVOR WINTERS, who has spent most of his life west of the city of Chicago, where he was born, has been at various times a dairy farmer, a breeder of Airedales, a school teacher and a college professor. He has published several volumes of verse, the most recent being "The Proof," has contributed to "The American Caravan" and is at present improving his shining hours between lectures at Stanford University by writing a volume of criticism.

LINDSAY ROGERS, a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, has taught at the University of Virginia and Harvard, and has been Burgess Professor of Public Law at Columbia University since 1929. He is a frequent contributor to journals of political science.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER, who was born in Ruthenia and came to this country at the age of five, is the author of a novel and a volume of verse. He has for some years been a student of matters Oriental. He is at present working on a novel.

ALLEN TATE, who has published two biographies of Southern heroes, a volume of verse, "Mr. Pope," and contributed to a pro-South and to an anti-Humanist symposium, is now a confirmed resident of Tennessee.

JON CHEEVER is the youthful author of "Expelled," an article describing his own experiences in prep school, which appeared last summer in The New Republic.

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